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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

THESE articles were edited and arranged for publication by Jonathan Goldstein from meetings held under the auspices of the Association for Asian Studies in Raleigh, North Carolina in January 1986 and Cambridge, Massachusetts in April 1987. They form a special issue of the *Neptune* in the year of the opening of the Peabody Museum's new Asian Export Art wing, since they help to explain the nature of China's foreign trade during the Qing (Ch'ing) period (1644-1911), especially its later years, when much of its export wares were produced for overseas American and European markets.

Three preliminary points, however, need to be made. The first is that two quite different series of routes were used to reach Chinese ports and especially Canton, where much of this commerce originated. The oldest, pioneered by the Arabs in the Middle Ages, went across the Indian Ocean, past India, Ceylon and the East Indies and then on to China. After 1498, first the Portuguese followed by the Dutch, the English and the French reached these routes after rounding the Cape of Good Hope from the Atlantic Ocean. The second route, pioneered by the Spanish in the sixteenth century, crossed the Pacific from Acapulco to the Philippines and then on to Canton. During the eighteenth century, English and French vessels entered this route by sailing around Cape Horn and proceeding up the west coast of the Americas as far north as Alaska where they met Russians from Siberia. They then crossed the Pacific mainly by way of Hawaii to reach Chinese shores. After the American Revolution, American vessels at first used the Cape of Good Hope route, but soon after 1820 also reached Canton and China by way of Cape Horn and Hawaii.

The second point concerns those who controlled the ships which were active in this commerce. It is true that Chinese vessels were actively engaged in maritime overseas commerce between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, especially in thirteenth century Sung times. And many Chinese settled overseas, as far as Indonesia and Malacca on the eastern set of routes into the Indian Ocean and Manila and even Mexico on the Pacific side. Yet by 1600 this had essentially ceased to be the case. The Chinese abandoned the sea and left their overseas commerce to foreigners, with only Chinese pirates along their shores representing a seapower which had been vital during Sung, Yuan and early Ming times. By the time of the Qing Dynasty, China had become a realm whose foreign trade was carried in non-Chinese ships controlled by Western Europeans to whom were added a little later on, Russian and American vessels.

Finally we need to note that the traditional overseas trade of the Chinese had always been unusual, unlike maritime commerce in the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Indian Ocean, which was largely made up of bulk cargoes, for Chinese overseas trade was always largely a commerce in high value luxury items like tea, silks and porcelains going out and spices, tropical wares, furs and specie coming in. Partly this was a result of deliberate, long-range governmental policies like those described in these articles. Partly it was due to the fact that Chinese *cash* currency used at home was valueless overseas and this separated the domestic market from those overseas. Partly it was due to the fact that China possessed within its borders almost all the foodstuffs and raw materials it needed and possessed a superb system of internal rivers, lakes and canals to move them from one area of the country to another without using the sea, as other civilizations had to do.

In short, to understand the China which produced wares for an export market, we must understand that the trade routes used were global ones which foreigners had controlled for centuries, and that the wares China imported and exported before the Opium Wars differed profoundly from those carried in vessels elsewhere in the Seven Seas. And this has remained true in many ways right into the twentieth century.

ARCHIBALD R. LEWIS

Salem, Massachusetts

Introduction to *Fresh Perspectives on Qing Dynasty Maritime Relations*

JONATHAN GOLDSTEIN

IN 1984 the Peabody Museum of Salem merged with the China Trade Museum of Milton, Massachusetts. As a result of this merger a new wing has been added to the Peabody to at least partially display a combined collection of some 10,000 Chinese, Japanese, South and Southeast Asian export art objects. Among the trade artifacts featured in the new wing are many paintings on ceramics, fabric, wood, paper and glass which are pictorial histories of East-West maritime interactions.

This special issue of *The American Neptune* is being published to herald the opening of the new Asian export art wing of the Peabody Museum. The volume is devoted exclusively to recent scholarship on the maritime trade and international relations of China's Qing (Ch'ing) dynasty (1644-1911). The articles in this special issue are written by historians who reveal new information or suggest fresh ways of looking at China's maritime past. Each article deals with China's foreign and domestic policy and with foreigners' views of China. The articles address many contemporary issues. In Qing dynasty China as well as in China today, Chinese bureaucrats grapple with the questions of how to develop the economy of the largest nation on earth and what particular role trade with the West should play in economic development. In both eras, the coastal provinces are the regions of China that most actively trade with the West. What should be the responsibility of the central governing authority in the capital city, Beijing (Peking)? To what degree should coastal provinces enjoy economic and political autonomy? To what extent should foreign businessmen be allowed trading privileges in China? What other freedoms should be permitted to Westerners resident in the "central nation," as China then or now refers to herself? What mechanisms should or should not exist for rectifying problems of commercial and maritime law arising between Chinese and Westerners?

This collection of articles offers varied and innovative points of view on the historical context in which these broader questions arose and on the circumstances under which Asian export art objects reached the West. The anthology is representative rather than comprehensive. It reflects perspectives of people who look at Sino-Western relations from different disciplines and who use different bodies of information particular to their disciplines: political, diplomatic, economic, legal, social and intellectual history. For comprehensive historical analysis the reader is referred to the extensive published scholarship of Hosea Ballou Morse, John K. Fairbank, Hsin-pao Chang, Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, W. E. Cheong, Yen-p'ing Hao, Louis Dermigny, Paul Cohen, Michael Hunt, and other scholars cited in footnotes to the articles in this volume. The reader can look forward to Professor Fairbank's forthcoming biography of Hosea Ballou Morse, which will analyze the contributions of an individual who was both a participant in Qing dynasty maritime relations and a historian of those relations.

The articles in this volume look at problems that led up to the Sino-British Opium War of 1839-1842, which forced reorientation of Qing maritime and diplomatic relations with the West. The first article in this volume, by political and diplomatic historian John E. Wills, Jr., sets out a broad theoretical framework for understand ing Qing maritime trade and international relations. Professor Wills explains misconceptions about the tribute system: how those misconceptions arose, how they can be clarified, how they can help us understand the third world today. He argues that traditionally scholars have over-used the terms "tribute system" and "Sinocentrism" to explain China's attitudes toward

Westerners at Canton in the 1700s and 1800s. A Sinocentric tribute ideology may have had relevance early in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) but had been replaced by the mid-Qing by a pragmatic attitude which Wills terms "defensiveness." Until the Opium War, this carefully managed system kept Canton trade balanced in China's favor and China's political control intact. It was a "triumph of Qing defensive policy," Wills argues, that "foreigners had no control of or even access to internal organization of production and trade and were restive in their confinement to Canton."

What ultimately undermined China's effective defensiveness? According to Wills, it was "economic dependency as a result of chemical dependency." China's favorable balance of trade with the West reversed as a trade in imported opium expanded. The reversal occurred roughly simultaneously with the growth of Chinese merchant indebtedness. The superficial trappings of a tribute system remained, the mere relic of a much more sophisticated defensive system. By the early nineteenth century the imperial court was waging a rear-guard action with the limited objective of preserving imperial order by attempting to prevent any direct violation of the capital by a foreign envoy.

Wills raises the fundamental questions of how and why Westerners became the manipulators rather than the manipulated. He directs us to current scholarship, including that by Professor Robert Gardella in this volume, which may offer particular information that can broaden our understanding of China's mid-nineteenth century defeat by Great Britain.

Professor Jane Leonard, author of the second article, comes to her study of Qing history with a regional/national background in late imperial Chinese and Southeast Asian history plus a theoretical background in international relations. Whereas Wills considers Qing international relations in general, Leonard differentiates between Qing relations with maritime Asia on the one hand (*nan-yang*) and with China's inner Asian borderlands on the other (inner and outer Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet). On the land frontier, complex arrangements existed to rule the inhabitants and integrate them into the empire. On the coast, the central government generally deferred to local economic and political interests. When intervention did occur, it was to safeguard those interests and eliminate potentially disruptive conditions.

Drawing upon both Chinese and Western sources, Professor Leonard probes the reasons for the "neglect" of the coast, ruling out the possibility that this was simply a bureaucratic oversight. She considers "benign neglect" to be a part of a skillful statecraft policy, premised on the unregulated development of economic ties between China's overseas junk trade, intracoastal trade, and the commerce of the Grand Canal zone. Laissez-faire was seen as the best way to insure regional economic development and thereby realize the strategic goals of long-term pacification and security in the coastal region.

Leonard probes how and why these early and mid-Qing policies were rendered ineffective and China's maritime frontier had, by the mid-nineteenth century, been redefined. While it is clear that the imposing presence of British warships forced this redefinition, Leonard offers insight into that transformation "from the ramparts of Peking and Jehol rather than from the bow of a Western merchant ship."

Professor Dian Murray, a modern Chinese historian, deals with an outside force which impinged on Sino-western maritime relations at Canton, with origins neither in the Qing governmental structure nor in Western merchant firms nor in the governments that stood behind them. From approximately 1790 to 1810, powerful pirates controlled much of the sea traffic along China's southern and southeastern coasts. Murray deals with the specifics of the harassment of Western vessels: when, where and how Western ships and crews fell captive; how they attempted to negotiate or otherwise obtain their release; and the contemporary issues associated with hostage release, such as government indecision, poor planning, and lack of communication. Murray also examines the violence pirates inflicted on Chinese river villages and towns that refused to pay for protection. She considers the implications of Westerners exhorting the Chinese government to unilateral or joint action against pirates. To what extent did the Westerners concerned, such as Portuguese, English, and Americans, cooperate among themselves in pirate suppression? To what extent did the pirate-suppression issue ultimately contribute to China's mid-century defeat by Great Britain? Murray argues that China's overall inactivity on the piracy issue, and particularly her inability to capitalize on Western goodwill and offers of cooperation in pirate suppression, was China's "last chance" to get its house in order and create an effective defense before the cataclysm of the Opium War.

Wills, Leonard, and Murray emphasize the Chinese context of Sino-Western relations. The fourth article, by Frederic D. Grant, Jr., opens another perspective and body of source material which can be used to gain a fuller understanding of Sino-Western interaction. Mr. Grant, a published historian of Sino-American legal interactions and a practicing attorney, draws upon his expertise in locating American legal documents to put together the first published case history of a native Chinese maritime trader who sought redress not from his own government but from the American judicial system. Grant provides basic, new information, that Chinese were suing in American courts. The Chinese were not cosmically-ignorant. But what kinds of Chinese? Clearly, only a Chinese of substantial means could avail himself of the elite form of redress Grant describes. Moreover, the substantial effort involved in suing in American courts was only justifiable for the retrieval of an extraordinary amount of money. The average Guangdong merchant had no hope of using American justice to collect a debt. Despite the rarified nature of this form of legal redress, Grant's study evaluates the responsiveness of the Chinese and American legal systems to the needs of a Chinese maritime trader, demonstrates how even a Chinese merchant of means could be at a ruinous disadvantage in the American courts, and calls attention to the usefulness of a heretofore little used historical source, nineteenth century American court records, for understanding the international commercial world in which Chinese and Western traders interacted.

Wills and Leonard deal only in the most general way with the conflict-ridden period which led up to the Opium War and with the specific mechanisms of coastal trade. In the fifth article Professor Robert Gardella, an economic historian, focuses on those institutional arrangements that did (or did not) facilitate pre-Opium War Canton trade. He uses contemporaneous Chinese and Western documents and applies twentieth century Chinese and Western economic theory to examine Canton's tea trade, which he calls "the largest and most valuable component" of mid-Qing international commerce. Gardella's conclusions reinforce Leonard's assertion that merchant capitalism flourished on the China coast and that market trade rather than administered trade prevailed. Gardella documents the existence of an economic exchange of substantial volume and impressive territorial scope, the product of a laissez-faire policy which, according to Leonard, was a conscious Qing administrative device.

Professor Murray A. Rubinstein's article provides an overview and summary of the immediate origins of the Opium War, that cataclysmic episode towards which the events described by Leonard, Gardella, Murray and Grant pointed. Rubinstein analyzes the mediated image that informed Western attitudes toward China in the early nineteenth century, focusing specifically on *The Chinese Repository,* a publication of the early nineteenth century American missionary community in China. The very existence of this community in China was a bi-product of the sea trade, for it was Western merchants, especially D. W. C. Olyphant of New York, who transported and assisted the American evangelicals and bankrolled their periodical.

As a social historian, Rubinstein addresses the issues of how a community lived, thought, felt, and acted. He does more than providing us with a series of biographical vignettes. He explains how the missionary community, although a bi-product of the China trade, turned activist and became a catalyst for American and British policy in China. Having delineated the ideational background of the evangelicals themselves, he explains how those same individuals, once in China, increasingly conceived of themselves and their tasks in militaristic terms. They battled a broadly-construed "heathenism" promulgated both by Chinese and by anyone else, including some Westerners, who stood in the way of their missionary endeavor. British warships and troops, according to Rubinstein, became the ultimate "weapons of God" for American missionaries in South China.

The final article in the volume is by Frederick Wakeman, Jr., a social historian who is president of the Social Science Research Council. In this capacity Dr. Wakeman is the American scholar perhaps most involved in encouraging and financing new research in the United States in all of the social sciences. Dr. Wakeman discusses the role he and his organization played in opening a heretofore inaccessible collection of Chinese documents which may radically change current understanding of Qing domestic and international affairs, including maritime trade. Professor Wills, who has recently been examining the archive Wakeman describes, alluded to the collection's importance in his article in this publication. We may look forward to this archive casting substantial additional light on the problems dealt with in this volume.

The editor hopes that the papers in this collection will stimulate additional questioning, reading and research about Qing dynasty maritime relations and the Asian commercial world that produced the wealth of artifacts in the Peabody Museum's Asian Export Art Wing. The scholarship in this volume largely emanates from two recent symposia on the general theme of Qing dynasty maritime trade and relations. The meetings were held under the auspices of the Association for Asian Studies in Raleigh, North Carolina, in January, 1986, and in Boston, Massachusetts, in April, 1987. For their criticism of these articles, the editor wishes to thank Professors Paul Cohen of Wellesley College and Harvard University Fairbank Center, Jonathan Ocko of North Carolina State University and Duke University, Lillian Li of Swarthmore College, and John Schrecker of Brandeis University and Harvard University Fairbank Center. For their technical and research assistance, the editor would like to thank the staffs of the Peabody Museum of Salem and Harvard Yenching Institute Library. For typing assistance, the editor is grateful to Darlene Jones of West Georgia College.

Lastly, the editor would like to point out that this journal uses the pinyin, or phonetic, method of romanizing Chinese. Pinyin is China's official system of romanization and has replaced, on the mainland, the Wade-Giles system of romanization developed by Westerners in the nineteenth century. In each article in this journal, the name more familiar to Westerners is placed in brackets alongside the Chinese name when it first occurs, but not subsequently. Example: Beijing (Peking).

Professor Goldstein, Guest Editor of this special issue of The American Neptune, *teaches East Asian history at West Georgia College and is a Research Associate of Harvard University's John K. Fairbank Center for East Asian Research. He received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Pennsylvania in 1973, published* Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682-1846. Commercial, Cultural, and Attitudinal Effects *(1978), and edited* Georgia's East Asian Connection, 1733-1983 *(1983).*

Tribute, Defensiveness, and Dependency: Uses and Limits of Some Basic Ideas About Mid-Qing Dynasty Foreign Relations

JOHN E. WILLS, JR.

THE study of the history of Qing dynasty foreign relations needs, but does not yet have, the kind of rigorous thinking and sustained debate on general concepts that has come to characterize the study of Qing social and economic history. This essay explores some basic ideas that may be of use in giving better focus to our discussions. Some are not yet in wide use in the field. Much more familiar are the concepts of "tribute" and "tribute system." These ideas bring into focus some very long continuities in the history of Chinese foreign relations. From about 200 B.C. on, Chinese officials paid much attention to the ceremonial forms of embassies. The ceremonial supremacy of the Son of Heaven was maintained. By presents, trade concessions, titles and ceremonious receptions, the Chinese rulers did their best to mollify dangerous foreigners. Limits were placed on quantities of trade and on the numbers of foreigners allowed to come to the capital. But only in the early fourteenth century, at the beginning of the Ming dynasty, did these long continuities coalesce into a single *system* of unilateral bureaucratic regulation centered on tribute embassies. This "tribute system" was largely moribund for maritime relations after 1549 and for Sino-Mongol relations after 1570.[1]

It would be conceptually clearer if the term "tribute system" were used only for this systematic complex of bureaucratic regulation developed around A.D. 1400. This system survived into the nineteenth century as a matrix for China's relations with Siam, Korea, the Ryukyus and Vietnam. It was not the core of Qing management of Inner Asian relations as it had been during the Ming. It had almost nothing to do with the management of trade with Europeans at Canton in the eighteenth century. Precedents for European involvement in the "tribute system" could be found in a succession of Dutch and Portuguese embassies between 1656 and 1687.[2] It made no difference at all in trade at Canton that the pre-Macartney English, the French, the Danes, and the Swedes never had been participants in the tribute system.

Official records of the early Qing European embassies helped to foster some scholars' illusions that the tribute system still was central to Chinese foreign relations. The misconception was reinforced by the recording as tribute embassies of every visit by a Mongol or other inner Asian dependent prince, even though the institutions that actually controlled these princes had little to do with the heritage of the Ming tribute system.[3] The illusion was strengthened in approximately 1839-1842 (the Opium War period) by statecraft scholars like Liang T'ing-nan, whose views were shaped by the fondness for precedent and bureaucratic system of the

1. See John E. Wills, Jr., *Embassies and Illusions: Dutch and Portuguese Envoys to K'ang-hsi, 1666-1687* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard East Asian Monographs, No. 113, Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, 1984), chapter one. As more volumes of the *Cambridge History of China* appear, providing much better guidance to main events, sources, and studies, *Embassies and Illusions* ought to be very rapidly superseded. It may continue to be of some use as a starting point for debate and revision on general issues and continuities.

The author wishes to thank all contributors to the session "Fresh Perspectives on Qing Dynasty Foreign Relations," Southeastern Regional Conference of the Association for Asian Studies, Raleigh, North Carolina, January 18, 1986, for their helpful comments. In particular he would like to thank Jonathan Ocko and Michael Hunt for their very stimulating criticisms and suggestions.

2. Wills, *Embassies and Illusions*, Chap. 2-5.

3. This point is not reflected in *Embassies and Illusions*. It can be clearly seen in the recently published diaries of imperial activities; *Kangxi qijuzhu* (Beijing, 1985).

"statecraft school" and by the political and cultural defensiveness of those scholars' time.[4] The views of scholars and officials of the Opium War period have had a great effect on Western scholarship, leading many to exaggerate the role of the "tribute system" in Sino-Western relations.[5]

One of the longer and more important continuities expressed in the Ming tribute system and its Qing continuations was "Sinocentrism," the sense of the superiority of the Son of Heaven over all other sovereigns and of the Chinese over all other cultures. The pitfalls of focussing on these continuities of symbolism and attitude in our studies of Chinese foreign relations are not as easy to define as those of the concept of a "tribute system," but they are very important.

In the first place, some sense of superiority and some ceremonial expression of it was almost universal in the great empires, and struggles over protocol and precedence also were prevalent in the multi-centered system of early modern Europe. Much more must be investigated and written to show the content of the Chinese sense of superiority and to explain its relatively weak translation into impulses to conquer and physically dominate "inferior" peoples. The "defensiveness" theme developed later in this essay may be helpful in this connection.

Second, it sometimes has been all too easy for foreign scholars to exaggerate the importance of this sense of superiority in the values and world-views of the traditional state and its elite. The Ming-early Qing elite do not appear to have written much about it at all. It may have been more important in earlier centuries.

Third, my own studies of Sino-Western relations and my reading of others' work on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries suggest numerous sources of conflict and misunderstanding that cannot be reduced to conflicts of world orders and world views.

A fourth concern is a general methodological one. General interpretative ideas must prove themselves by their heuristic fruitfulness, by their ability to allow us to focus on and make sense of, not to explain away or put beyond the horizon, the actions described in our sources and their most proximate or apparent motives. As outsiders, we must be especially careful to avoid a premature resort to differences in world views and values as explanations of actions and policies, which posits a too-simple unity of very complex phenomena and licenses inattention to alternative explanations, including those actually offered by our sources. Premature resort to the "tribute ideology" or "Sinocentrism" is an example of the kind of naive anthropologizing and exoticizing of China that still is a major obstacle to the integration of Chinese history in the emerging discourse on world history.[6]

As an heuristic strategy, it may be preferable to lean in the other direction, to assume that Chinese actors in foreign relations had motives very similar to those anyone would have had in their circumstances, such as profit, self-defense, or defeat of their enemies. Their actions and policies may have been shaped more by the logic of the situation than by the distinctive world-views and values of the Sinocentric tribute ideology. Western sources often record Qing officials pursuing all kinds of proximate "realistic" goals in their dealing with foreigners and implicitly and sometimes explicitly recognizing that they must bargain with foreigners as equals. When specifically Chinese sources of action are found, they are not limited to Sinocentrism but also include special types of bureaucratic and commercial organization, modes of interpersonal interaction, ways of fighting civil and foreign wars, and role-definitions and personality types in Chinese political culture.[7]

As we continue to study cases of Chinese foreign relations from about 1400 to 1800, we may well find cases in which we must acknowledge the shaping power of Sinocentric values and world views. More evidence of the power of this ideology may emerge from the huge Chinese and Manchu documentation in Beijing's First Historical Archive described later in this publication. But Sinocentrism may still be the wrong place to begin, because it short-circuits the necessity of paying attention to all the evidence, to all institutions and patterns of action. It is too easy for us as outsiders to say "the Chinese thought differently," and thus to cut short an interpretative process that ought to begin by assuming broad similarities of human needs and motives.

4. Wills, *Embassies and Illusions*, p. 189.

5. John King Fairbank started our discussion of the tribute system. Others have repeated and simplified his suggestions. His descriptions of Chinese foreign relations have remained multi-dimensional, concrete, and wary of big words and facile generalizations.

6. John E. Wills, Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1662-1681* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 205.

7. For development of the latter point, see Michael H. Hunt, "Chinese Foreign Relations in Historical Perspective," in Harry Harding, ed., *China Foreign Relations in the 1980's* (New Haven, Conn. Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 1-42.

We may be able to get farther toward a general view of traditional Chinese foreign relations if we begin with a perception of the defensiveness of Ming foreign policy after about 1425 and of Qing policy about 1644 toward maritime foreign relations. This interpretation can be much more fully linked than can the Sinocentric ideological one to our current understanding of many facets of the late imperial state and society. We have recently learned much about the commercial energy and responsiveness of large segments of the late imperial population, and about the capacities of many Chinese for intense and focussed religious commitment. Chinese statesmen were aware of the disruptions of order that could result from profit-seeking or religious commitment, especially when they led to involvement with foreigners. Unlike the governmental system of Tokugawa Japan, the Ming or Qing government did not have sufficient resources or manpower to establish coercive control over its vast area and population, and had to depend on cultural controls and on the incentives to elite conformity provided by the examination system. Foreigners could disrupt this control and spread subversion by proselytizing, attracting people with profits of trade, or supporting outlaw elements. Thus it was important that contact with foreigners be prevented simply by keeping them out of the empire as much as possible, and by keeping them under strict bureaucratic control when they were admitted. In Ming times the defensive tendency was dominant on all frontiers, including the maritime prohibitions in response to the "Japanese pirates." The Great Wall and manipulation of the tribute system proved inadequate to deal with aggression from Inner Asia. In Qing times the defensive tendency was modified on the Inner Asian frontier by the Manchu expansionism discussed below. Defensiveness was reinforced on the coast by worries about anti-Qing Chinese and by the growing European presence. Foreign affairs were discussed in Qing statecraft compendia under the headings of "maritime defense" (hai fang) and "border defense" (bian fang). Bureaucratic systematization of the management of embassies—the tribute system—can best be seen as a special form of this defensiveness, defending the imperial ceremonial order against any direct violation at the capital by a foreign envoy, controlling carefully embassies making their way through the Chinese interior.

This focus on defensiveness derives from a study of mid seventeenth century European relations with the Qing, when foreigners so often confronted tight control or complete exclusion. Most aspects of eighteenth-century Sino-Western relations can be explained by the concept of defensiveness.[8] It seems that a general turn toward increased restrictiveness toward Europeans after about 1745 was set off in part by increased worries about missionary subversion. Such a hypothesis fits nicely within a focus on the defensiveness of Qing policy toward many forms of foreign encroachment and enticement. In longer time perspectives and in relation to the immense and successful aggressiveness of Qing Inner Asian policy, "defensiveness" is not enough.

Perhaps we can begin to make some progress toward an integrated understanding of defensive and aggressive tendencies by thinking of the expansionism from approximately A.D. 618 to 907 (the Tang dynasty) as the product of an elite of "northern" ethnically mixed heritage and political style. The expansionist heritage continued though Liao, Jin, and Yuan into early Ming (ca. A.D. 1400) but then abruptly disappeared. It resurfaced in the Qing in the great Inner Asian campaigns and thorough administrative control of the Mongols that had few Ming precedents. It was a Manchu-Mongol achievement in which few Han Chinese were involved. The development of the defensive pattern in the Song (A.D. 860-1279) can be seen along with the demilitarization of the high political elite and the dominance of scholar-officials selected by examinations. The full triumph of both trends—examination system and tribute system—was in the Ming.

Qing aggressiveness and administrative domination of the Mongols defended China's northern frontier as Ming defensiveness never could. But the Mongolian Superintendency (Lifan Yuan) was a Manchu and Mongol preserve, and few Han Chinese statesmen were directly involved in Inner Asian policy. A final twist on defensiveness and aggressiveness, Manchu and Han Chinese, came when the court's traditional Inner Asian orientation was given substance by the reconquest of Chinese Turkestan in the 1870s under the command of the Hunanese scholar-official Zuo Zongtang. The regular provincial administration established in Xinjiang made that territory not just a zone for episodic Chinese domination and manipulation, as it had been since the Han, but Chinese territory with a border to be defended, just at

8. See J. L. Cranmer-Byng and John E. Wills, Jr., "Ch'ing Trade and Diplomacy with Maritime Europe, 1664-c. 1800," *Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 9, in press.

the time when traditional defensive strategies were collapsing on the coast.

China in the eighteenth century was not a victim of maritime Western imperialism. Its balance of trade at Canton was positive, its political control intact, a triumph of Qing defensive policy. Foreigners had no control over or even access to internal organization of production and trade and were restive in their confinement to Canton. Politically this situation remained unchanged until the Opium War. "Dependency theory" emphasizes the negative economic, social and political consequences of third world countries' involvement in the world economy regardless of formal independence or colonial rule.[9] If we focus on terms of trade and world market relations according to this theory, we will see the first signs of trouble for China in the growth of Chinese foreign trade merchant indebtedness in the 1770s and 1780s. There was a more definite shift in the reversal of terms of trade as the opium trade grew: economic dependency as a result of chemical dependency. However, the origins of China's decline into a dependent, "third world" relation to the world economy can be found even in the heyday of the positive balance of the Canton trade. When we try to explain the peculiarities of China's decline they lead us into not so much a rejection of the dependency approach as a twofold modification of it that incorporates elements of the emphasis on internal weakness that the dependency theorists so deeply distrust.[10]

First, the changing nature of foreign demand for Chinese goods altered the interaction between foreign trade and endogenous growth trends in the Chinese economy. The late Ming export surge had been primarily in raw silk and silk fabrics, products of the highly commercialized rural and urban economy south of the Chang Jiang (Yangtze River). Japanese and European demand for Chinese silks weakened in Qing times and the great growth in exports was in tea, produced largely in remote rural areas. Late Ming foreign trade had given impetus to the most advanced and urbanized part of the Chinese economy. The Qing trade now fostered the growth of a rural monoculture with a pool of migrant labor swollen by the eighteenth-century growth of population.

Second, there were competitive as well as monopolistic tendencies on both sides of the Canton Trade, but it was the Europeans who were more and more able to bend the terms of trade to their advantage. Despite the complaints of Westerners about bad debts, a large proportion of the sums owed eventually was paid, as a result of the conscientious efforts of merchants and officials. Since official exactions were one cause of the merchants' growing debts, it is clear that the bureaucracy was part of the problem for Chinese merchants, part of the solution for Westerners. The officials failed to support their merchants in other ways. Officials do not seem to have used their ultimate control of the trade to put pressure on the foreigners to offer better prices for Chinese exports. The brief period, 1760-1771, when there was real unity of the Chinese merchants in a gong hang (cohong) also was a period of vigorous competition among the English, French, Dutch, and other East India Companies, so that the Chinese sometimes were able to exact better prices and terms of trade. But the gong hang was broken by merchants who wanted to undersell their competitors and were able to bribe the officials. Thereafter there always was competition among the licensed monopolists, and the competitive pressure to hold prices down always could be passed on through a typically Chinese commercial system of many layers of intermediary agents to the usually small producing farms and by them to their desperately poor seasonal work force. The most striking result of this is the emergence, well before the shift of the balance of trade, of a price regime much like that of the vulnerable third-world primary producer in our own times. With the large net imports of silver some price inflation would be expected. It can be seen in most import and export commodities, but not for the all-important tea exports, for which prices fell early in the century and then held remarkably constant as volume expanded enormously.

These are rather basic points about the Canton trade. Why, then, are they not already common knowledge or common topics of argument? Our field is still in a very uneven state of development. In studies of the Canton trade little has been done to follow up and test Louis Dermigny's insights and suggestions referred to by

9. A useful short introduction to dependency theory is Ronald H. Chilcote, *Theories of Development and Underdevelopment* (Boulder, Co. Westview Press, 1984). Efforts to apply this approach to China, with very little attention to anything before the Opium War, are Frances V. Moulder, *Japan, China, and the Modern World Economy* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1977) and Philip C. C. Huang, ed., *The Development of Underdevelopment in China* (White Plains, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1980).

10. For details and bibliography on the Canton trade see Cranmer-Byng and Wills, cited in note 8.

Robert Gardella in this volume.[11] Furthermore, we have tended to accept Hosea Ballou Morse's interpretations of events instead of carefully reading his summaries of the records and quotation from them or going back to the records themselves.[12] Recently, there have been some good beginnings on the trade of the competitors of the English, and some first explorations of archive materials both in Beijing and Taibei. Work in progress by Hoh-cheung and Lorna Mui, W. E. Cheong, and Gardella should raise our studies of this subject to a new level of sophistication. There has been almost no scholarly interest in this subject at Guangzhou itself, but this situation may begin to change.

In looking at the broader range of studies of premodern Chinese foreign relations, we should simply admit that for the last twenty years this field has been unfashionable and underpopulated. Each of us working in it has confronted the challenges of mastering at least two languages, two sets of documentation, two cultures and histories. Our first task has been figuring out what happened in the interactions we study, and what the contexts of endogenous change were on both sides. This frequently has turned out to be a lifetime project for a scholar. Few have had time or energy left to compare their case studies, to draw general lessons about the nature of cross-cultural diplomacy and conflict or about continuities and changes in the Chinese diplomatic tradition. Much of what has been done in the way of generalization about the Chinese diplomatic tradition has begun by looking back from its final debacle in the nineteenth century. That is an important perspective, but even for nineteenth century history we need to understand the contingent changes, both endogenous and in foreign relations, that produced the particular shape of Chinese diplomacy around the Opium War. Other periods must be studied for themselves, not just as background to the great crisis.

11. Louis Dermigny, *La Chine et L'Occident. Le Commerce à Canton au xviii^e Siècle 1719-1833.* 4 Vols. (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1964).

12. Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company.* 5 Vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926).

Work in progress on the Canton trade, and the *Cambridge History of China,* can be expected to make great contributions to this field. As these new studies become available, the time should be ripe for scholars to move beyond the accumulation of case studies, to become more intellectually ambitious and more self-critical. We should not tolerate the conceptual muddle that authors continue to get into around the phrase "tribute system." We should begin to see our studies as contributions not only to Chinese history but also to efforts to generalize about cross-cultural trade and diplomacy and to the study of the changing networks of land and sea relations that linked the great civilizations. We should attempt to keep up with scholarship in these fields, and to contribute to meetings and journals focussed on them. We are just beginning to develop intellectual ambitions to match the intrinsic importance and the broad horizons of our subject.

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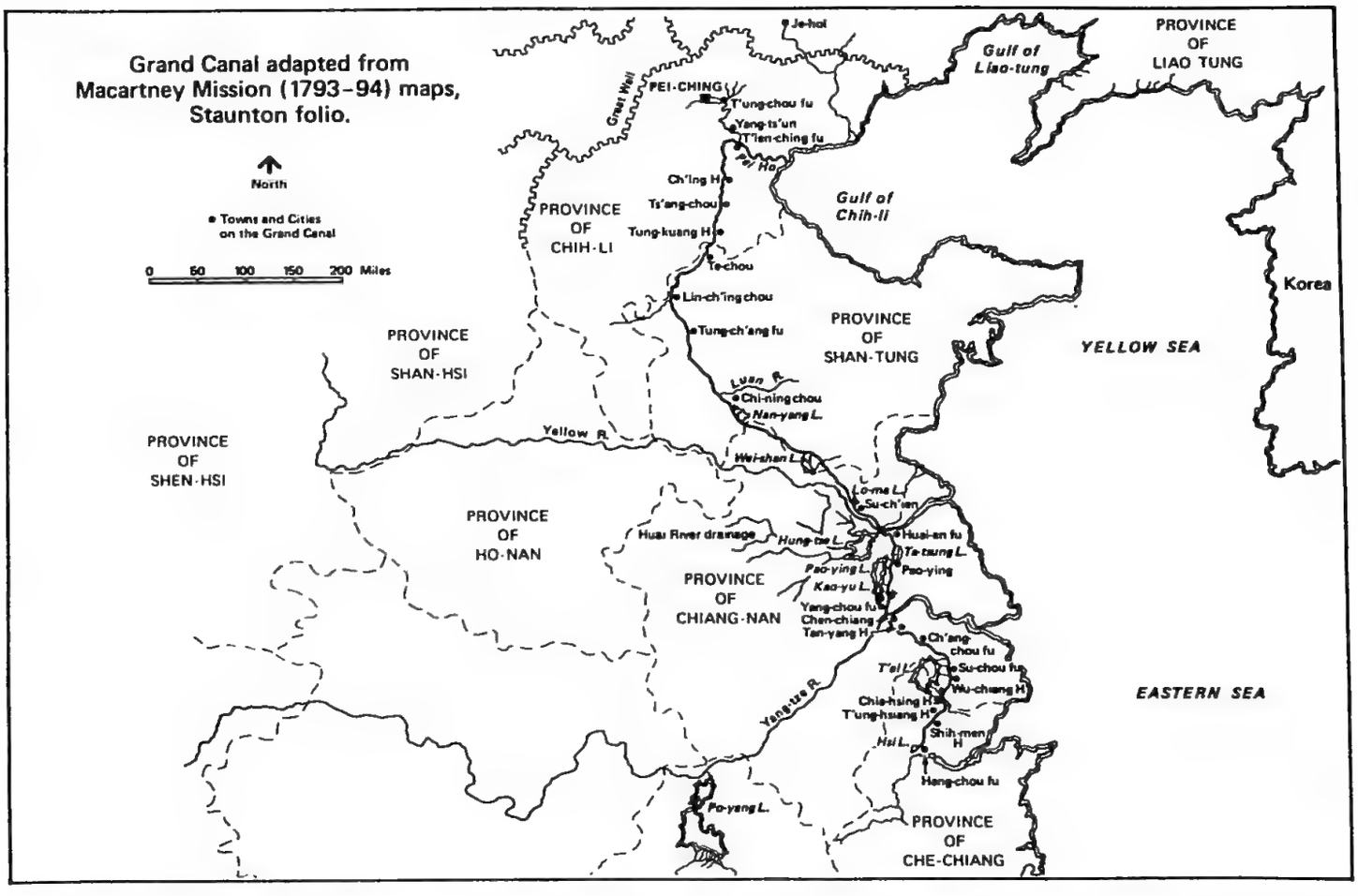
Geopolitical Reality and the Disappearance of the Maritime Frontier in Qing Times

JANE KATE LEONARD

GEOPOLITICAL reality in the maritime regions of China was, in the eyes of the early Manchu (Qing) emperors, trade writ large. It was the huge sprawling trade network crafted over the centuries by Chinese junk traders plying the coastal waters of China and the seas of maritime Asia. The geopolitical concerns evoked by this trade had nothing whatever to do with the foreign maritime world, formal interstate relations, or the trickle of foreign trade that made its way to the coast, Thai rice shipments notwithstanding. Maritime trade loomed large in Manchu eyes in the latter half of seventeenth century for one reason and one reason alone. It was considered the key to successful pacification and long-term security in the coastal region. And this was, in turn, linked to the control and security of the Grand Canal zone, one of two pivotal strategic zones that dominated the Qing conception of empire. This unique conception of empire and the Qing goals and priorities it expressed had a profound effect on Chinese maritime relations and led to what I would assert was the virtual "disappearance" of the maritime frontier until the events of the Opium War (1839-1842) proved that foreigners as well as internal rebels could affect the security of the Grand Canal zone. This essay examines the disappearance of the maritime frontier in order to highlight the geopolitical setting within which maritime trade and commerce were conducted. The intention throughout is to capture and recreate the Manchu geopolitical view of the coast from the ramparts of Peking and Jehol rather than from the bow of a Western merchant ship even though it was the merchant ship in the end that brought about the rediscovery of this "lost" frontier in the nineteenth century.

The Qing emperors, with one foot straddling the Manchurian homeland and the other the capital at Peking, saw empire in China differently than had their imperial predecessors. Their view of empire focused less on traditional frontiers and the dangerous distinction between foreigner and Chinese that would only reinforce their own "foreignness" in the eyes of the Chinese. Instead, they focused on two fundamental goals: 1) to conquer both Inner Asia and China and integrate them into one expanded, unified state, and 2) to fund this imperial adventure from wealth extracted and shipped from the rice-producing heartland in the lower Yangze (Chang Jiang) valley. Reflecting these twin goals, the Qing strategic view centered on two main zones: the Inner Asian borderlands and the Grand Canal region, the one extending north and west beyond the frontiers of China proper, the other southward 1,060 miles to Hangzhou, deep in the interior of China.

The Qing emperors boldly experimented and fashioned new institutional structures to achieve their goals of integrating the vast region of Inner Asia into the political-administrative framework of China proper, thus guaranteeing Qing hegemony throughout the borderlands. In Manchuria and in each of the remaining border areas of Inner and Outer Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet, these institutions were designed to work effectively in response to unique local conditions, and they ranged from the directly governed, provincial-banner structure in Manchuria to the military protectorates formed in Mongolia and Xinjiang that utilized a variety of forms of indirect rule at the local level. In Mongolia, indirect rule rested on monastic organization associated with the Yellow Sect of Lamaist Buddhism and the banner system. In Tibet, the Qing presence in Jinghai and Eastern Kham overlay the indigenous local order. In Xinjiang a staggering diversity of institutions existed side by side, including military and civilian agricultural colonies, Mongol banners, tributary arrangements with roving bands of Kazakh and Kirghiz, and virtually au-



tonomous Islamic oases communities ruled either by hereditary or bureaucratic *begs*.

All these institutions reshaped and redefined the political and cultural relationship between the Chinese state and the Inner Asian borderlands, confirming the inhabitants, not as foreign barbarians, but as non-Han subjects. This transformation of barbarians into non-Han subjects and the barbarian regions into an integral part of China continued throughout the dynasty and culminated in the establishment of the province of Xinjiang in 1884. While this process created a whole series of new problems, now labelled internal problems, it fundamentally changed the relationship between China and the borderlands and redefined the location and very nature of the Inner Asian frontier in modern times.[1]

The Canal zone was an issue of another kind. In the eyes of the Qing conquerors it was of much greater importance than the Inner Asian zone because it was, as the Daoguang Emperor asserted in 1825, "the fiscal base of empire" on which all else depended.[2] The imperial goal for the Canal zone was to build and maintain a political-administrative structure that enabled the emperors to supervise directly the management of the Grand Canal-grain transport system and those particu-

1. Dorothy Borei, "Images of the Frontier: the Conquest and Colonization of Sinkiang," (unpub. paper, Southeast Conference, Association for Asian Studies, Chattanooga, 16-17 Jan., 1987); John K. Fairbank and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Cambridge History of China: 10 Late Ch'ing 1800-1911, Pt. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 35-144, 361-66; Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, "British Mediation of China's War with Yakub Beg, 1877," *Central Asiatic Journal* (Leiden) 9, 2: 142-49 (June 1964); and his *The Ili Crisis: a Study of Sino-Russian Diplomacy, 1871-1881* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); and his *The Rise of Modern China*, 3d ed. (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 19-42, 107-119, 318-25; Jane Kate Leonard, "Qing Perceptions of Geopolitical Reality in the 1820s," *American Asian Review* 5, 2: 63-97 (Summer 1987); Lucien Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century: History of the Establishment of the Chinese Protectorate in Tibet*, Monographies du T'oung Pao (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1950); Ram Rahul, *Politics of Central Asia* (London: Curzon Press, 1974); Morris Rossabi, *China and Inner Asia from 1368 to the Present Day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975).

2. Shang-yü tang fang-pen (Record Book of Ordinary Grand Council Affairs), 4(1824), 12, 18.

Caption: Chinese Military guard post on Grand Canal, 1793-94, from George Staunton, *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (London: George Nicol, 1797), folio, #18.

lar provincial matters that bore on its security.[3] The maritime coast was just such a provincial matter. The coast was viewed first and foremost as the eastern perimeter of the Canal zone, not as a frontier separating China from the maritime world. What is more, conditions in the coastal region were seen as bearing directly on the security of the Canal. This fact was demonstrated during the early Qing dynasty when Zheng Chenggong (Koxinga)'s maritime empire (1645-1683) based in the southeast coastal region, emerged as the pivot of anti-Manchu resistance movements in South China.

The Zheng regime, born in the late Ming period, was the political expression of the vast commercial empire forged by centuries of Chinese junk traders plying Chi-

3. Antonia Finnane, "Bureaucracy and Responsibility: a Reassessment of the River Administration under the Qing," *Papers on Far Eastern History*, Australian National University, 30 (September 1984), pp. 161-98; and her "Prosperity and Decline under the Qing: Yangzhou and Its Hinterland, 1644-1810" (Ph.D dissertation, Australian National University, 1985); Pei Huang, ed., "The Early Ch'ing Dynasty: State and Society, 1601-1722(1)," *Chinese Studies in History 14*, 4 (Summer 1981); Jane Kate Leonard, "'Controlling from Afar': Open Communications and the Tao-kuang Emperor's Control of Grand Canal-Grain Transport Management, 1824-26," *Modern Asian Studies* (forthcoming); Liu Ta-nien, "On the K'ang-hsi Emperor," *Chinese Studies in History* 14, 4: 76-107 (Summer 1981); Liu Te-jen, "Lun K'ang-hsi ti chih-ho kung-chi (On the K'ang-hsi Emperor's achievements in river management), *Fu-yin pao-k'an tzu-liao*, K 2, 14: 115-120 (1981); Mu Hung-ch'ang, "K'ang-hsi chih-ho" (The K'ang-hsi Emperor and river management), *Pei-fang lun-ts'ung* 5: 29-32 (1982); Shang Hung-k'uei, "K'ang-hsi nan-hsun yü chih-li Huang-ho" (The K'ang-hsi Emperor's management of the Yellow River and his southern tours), *Fu-yin pao-k'an tzu-liao*, K 2, 16: 111-120 (1981).

Caption: The Grand Canal south of the Yangtze River (Chang Jiang) from George Staunton. *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (London: George Nicol, 1797), folio, #40.

na's coastal waters and the sea lanes to maritime Asia, the *Nan-yang*. It was based in the southeastern coastal region and drew its support from the coastal Chinese whose economy was deeply enmeshed in maritime enterprise. At its height, Zheng power extended along the coast from Shandong to Guangdong and up the Yangze valley in striking distance of the Grand Canal. Because of the strength and longevity of the Zheng regime, it provided a powerful connecting thread between the early Ming loyalist groups organized around fleeing Ming princes from 1645 to 1662 and the later San Fan Rebellion from 1662 to 1681.[4]

Anti-Manchu resistance, with its brutal racist elements, left an indelible imprint on the Qing leadership that is seen in its authoritarian administrative style, its obsession with "literary cases," and its unique pattern of control over provincial administration in China proper. With respect to the coastal region, the struggle taught the Manchu emperors, especially the young Kangxi Emperor (1661-1722), two very important strategic lessons that shaped the Qing conception of empire and decisively changed maritime affairs: first, the ability to tap the revenue base in the lower Yangze valley depended on internal security in the coastal region; second, the successful long-term pacification of the

4. Jane Kate Leonard, "Qing Perceptions," see note 1; and her *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1984), 63-77; Lynn Struve, *The Southern Ming, 1644-1662* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984); Ts'ao Kai-fu, "The Rebellion of the Three Feudatories against the Manchu Throne in China, 1673-1681: Its Setting and Significance" (Ph D dissertation, Columbia University, 1965); John Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: the Dutch East India Company in China, 1622-1681* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

coast depended on the continued development of the coastal economy around maritime trade.

These lessons were taken to heart by the Kangxi Emperor who, when Ming loyalist resistance was crushed, simultaneously began rebuilding the Grand Canal-grain transport system and restoring the economy of the coastal region. Responsibility for the former was kept tightly grasped in imperial hands with the emperor assuming special responsibility for its management. The latter began with imperial initiatives that defined the main elements of coastal policy and ended up with a unique pattern of provincial administration that was responsive to local maritime interests and placed a lot of power and responsibility for maritime defense and trade administration into the hands of those interests.[5]

The Kangxi Emperor's first acts reflected his commitment to restore the local economy and respond to local interests, and they included the legalization of the junk trade (1684-1685), the opening of coastal ports, and the resettlement of coastal districts that had experienced forced evacuation during the resistance war (1683, 1687). These acts recognized important economic realities on the coast, realities that the Ming had tried to avoid or thwart by their restrictive treatment of trade at the coastal ports and by their vain attempts to harness the trade within the so-called "tributary system."[6] In contrast, the Qing leadership saw both the coasting and the *Nan-yang* trade as interconnected and almost indistinguishable parts of the Chinese junk trade—a trade on which the economic survival of the region depended.[7]

As a result, the management of trade, coasting and foreign, was separated from the management of foreign relations. A system of port management was established that placed nominal responsibility in the hands of a court appointee, the Hoppo, who was really just there to "skim off the cream." But real responsibility for the day-to-day management of trade, as well as marine defense, was shouldered by locals who played official and semi-official roles in the customs and port administration that ranged from clerks and powerful hong-merchant brokers to key officers in the Green Standard navy. The diversity in the customs administration from one port to the next (that later Western traders complained so bitterly about) reflected the diversity of local interests—interests that the system was designed to support without interference from the Customs Superintendents or provincial authorities. The subtlety and complexity of the Qing pattern of coastal administration has been brilliantly documented in the recent study by Ng Chinkeong, University of Singapore. In what may be the most important work in Chinese maritime history since Ma Huan, he dissects the Amoy trading network and demonstrates how Qing policy set the stage for the growth and integration of the Chinese junk trade into the regional coastal economy.[8]

Imperial power was used aggressively during the Kangxi reign to define policy and create institutions that were driven by and safeguarded local interests. By so doing, it fostered a pattern of purposeful imperial neglect of coastal affairs for the rest of the dynasty. After the Kangxi reign, the management of maritime affairs did not see sustained imperial involvement as did other more high priority areas of administration. However when the emperors did intervene, they did so on behalf of local interests when these were threatened, often by provincial authorities, or when disruptive influences appeared that local institutions were unable to cope with effectively.

Imperial reliance on a locally-driven pattern of maritime administration gambled on the belief that economic self-interest would guarantee order and stability in the coastal region. But just to be sure, the Qing leadership pursued a second, back-up policy of neutralizing and isolating the coast from disruptive influences, foreign and indigenous, that might create disturbances in the region. Although the maritime world was perceived as largely trivial in strategic terms, there were a few issues that the ever-vigilant Qing emperors had gnawing suspicions about, such as the status of Taiwan, Chinese emigration, the trickle of foreign trade that arrived at China's ports, and Catholic prosyletizing. These suspicions, in the beginning, led to the annexation of Taiwan (1684) to keep it free of foreigners and rebels; it led peri-

5. Jennifer Wayne Cushman, " Fields from the Sea: Chinese Junk Trade with Siam during the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" (Ph.D dissertation, Cornell University, 1975); Leonard, *Wei Yuan*, 63-77; Ng Chin-keong, *Trade and Society. The Amoy Network on the China Coast 1683-1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983).

6. Chang Te-ch'ang, "Maritime Trade at Canton during the Ming Dynasty," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 17, 2: 264-82 (July 1933); Ch'en Wen-shih, *Ming Hung-wu Chia-ching chien ti hai-chin cheng-ts'e* (Maritime trade prohibitions of the Hung-wu to the Chia-ching reigns; Taipei, 1966); John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast. The Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [1953], 1964), pp. 23-53.

7. Cushman, "Fields from the sea"; see note 5.

8. Ng Chin-keong, *The Amoy Network;* see note 5.

"House of Conseequa, a Chinese Merchant in the Suburbs of Canton," from George Newenham Wright, *China, in a Series of Views, Displaying the Scenery, Architecture and Social Habits of that Ancient Empire* 1 (London: Fisher, 1848), p. 95.

odically to the imposition of controls on emigration and length of stay abroad for Chinese junk traders and to prohibitions on foreign evangelizing. It also led to the restriction of Western traders to Canton (1760) when their numbers started to increase in the mid-eighteenth century.[9]

Later when the effects of demographic change began to be felt in the eighteenth century and local institutions began to crumble under their weight, imperial action was taken to reinforce local order, such as in the case of the risings on Taiwan (1720s, 1780s), the outbreak of Chinese and Vietnamese piracy on the coast, and the spread of interlineage conflict.[10] However, for the most part, the pattern established in the early Qing that bowed to local economic interests and local responsibility remained in place, and imperial intervention, when it

9. Louis Dermigny, *Le commerce à Canton au xviii siècle 1719-1833*, 3 Vols, 1 album (Paris: École Pratique des Hautes Études, 1964); Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy*, op. cit.; Earl H. Pritchard, *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750-1800* (Pullman, Wash.: State College of Washington, 1936).

10. Leonard, *Wei Yuan*, 79-92; Dian H. Murray, "Sea Bandits: a Study of Piracy in Early Nineteenth Century China" (Ph.D dissertation, Cornell University, 1979); Wei Peh-t'i, "Internal Security and Coastal Control: Juan Yuan and Pirate Suppression in Chekiang 1799-1809," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 4, 2: 83-112 (December, 1979).

did occur, did so to safeguard those interests and mute conditions that might create disorder. The main lines of this policy were perpetuated until the Opium War (1839-42).

Qing policy created an institutional structure for maritime defense and trade administration that was consistent, not only with the economic needs of the coastal region, but more importantly with the strategic goals of the Qing leadership. This policy gave an internal security gloss to issues and events on the coast, relating them to the stability of the Grand Canal zone rather than to the foreign maritime world. In view of these developments, it can be said that in the grand span of Chinese history, the Qing period marks a major watershed in Chinese maritime history. The Qing regime's legitimation of the junk traders' empire and the creation of new institutions for its management led to the successful integration of this border region into the political, administrative, and economic framework of China proper. These developments must be seen as completing the logistical withdrawal from the coast begun by the Ming after the Yung-lo reign (1403-1425).[11] And this process sounded the death knell of formal, practical interstate relations with the maritime world in all but their ceremonial and ritual forms. In other words, the Qing "internalized" or drew inwards the maritime region in much the same way as they were simultaneously drawing the great expanses of Inner Asia inwards, pushing the frontiers out beyond the Pamirs.

Similarly, the maritime frontier, separating Chinese and foreigners, was pushed farther and farther out into the dim and shadowy regions of the *Nan-yang*, an area of absolutely no strategic consequence in the Qing view of empire. This is vividly demonstrated by the lack of Chinese geographical writing about the maritime world during the Qing period. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, the Chinese relied on works written in the early Ming period in response to the Ming maritime expeditions (1402-1425) and on geographies written by the Jesuit missionaries in the late Ming and early Qing periods. Even though a few Chinese coastal observers and travelers recognized the significance of European penetration of the traditional *Nan-yang*, their writings made no impact on the elite Chinese geographical tradition or on the elite Chinese mind. And there it rested until the explosive events of the Opium War turned Chinese attention to the menacing threat posed by Western domination of maritime Asia.[12]

The maritime frontier disappeared. It ceased to be written about or read about by anyone who mattered until it was demonstrated during the Opium War that British ships could penetrate the Yangze and create conflict on the coast as the Zheng regime had done two hundred years earlier. At this point, the maritime frontier was rediscovered and redefined; the line was drawn again between the China coast and a radically transformed and threatening maritime world; and new institutions were devised over the course of a century to protect the geopolitical and moral integrity of the Chinese people. In retrospect, the Qing story stands out as one centered exclusively on the internal integration of the maritime borderlands. The modern story is one of maintaining that legacy.

11. Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973); Edward L. Farmer, *Early Ming Government; the Evolution of Dual Capitals* (Cambridge: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1976); Wang Gung-wu, "The Opening of Relations between China and Malacca, 1403-5," in John Bastin and R. Roolvink, eds., *Malayan and Indonesian Studies. Essays Presented to Sir Richard Winstedt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 87-104; and his "Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia: a Background Essay," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 34-62; and his "China and South-east Asia, 1402-1424," in Jerome Ch'en and Nicholas Tarling, eds., *Social History of China and South-east Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 375-401.

12. Kenneth K.S. Chen, "Hai-lu: Forerunner of Chinese Travel Accounts of Western Countries," *Monumental Serica* 7: 218-26 (1942); and his "Matteo Ricci's Contribution to, and Influence on, Geographical Knowledge in China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 59: 325-59 (1939).

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Commerce, Crisis, Coercion: The Role of Piracy in Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Sino-Western Relations

DIAN MURRAY

DURING most of the period between 1790 and 1810, the southern and southeastern coasts of China were under the grip of powerful pirates who controlled the flow of traffic to the sea. Nowhere was the situation more critical than in Guangdong (Kwangtung) province, where by 1805 a confederation of 70,000 men and 2,000 vessels was in complete control of the province's coasting trade and fishing industry. Scarcely a junk dared leave port without first buying protection from the confederation against attack. Along the rivers the confederation extorted semi-annual payments from the villages and towns and burned with impunity those that refused to pay.

The pirate actions frequently affected the European communities as well, especially when repeated pirate occupations of the Pearl River severed communication between Guangzhou (Canton) and Macao and disrupted the trade. As individual gigs, pinnaces, and crew members fell captive, Europeans had little choice but to negotiate with the pirates for their own safety and that of their ships and crews.

But pirates were not the only problem confronting Europeans in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century China, for trouble upon the water forced them to interact with "establishment" Chinese—merchants and mandarins—in ways that were both unpleasant and unproductive.

European involvement with "establishment" Chinese was necessitated when the latter proved unable to counter the pirates on their own.[1] But what doomed the involvement from the start was Chinese officials' unwillingness to acknowledge the seriousness of the problem and their reluctance to swallow their pride and solicit directly from Europeans the assistance that might have enabled them to quiet the sea. Yet repeated crises frequently rendered emergency aid indispensable. Even then Chinese officials insisted on obtaining it through the formalities of what was, to them at least, a still operative tribute system.[2] The period 1790-1810 was punctuated on each end by the British tribute missions to Beijing (Peking) of Lord Macartney in 1793 and Lord Amherst in 1816.

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1. Chinese inability to exterminate the pirates stemmed from a variety of causes. During the 1790s when piracy might have been nipped in the bud, government officials were more preoccupied with the White Lotus Rebellion that was simultaneously ravishing the heartland closer to Beijing. Consequently, they paid little attention to what was taking place along the maritime frontier. Between 1795 and 1802, the pirates received patronage from the Tay-son government in Vietnam. Because Vietnam was a "tributary power" and because a Chinese military expedition sent to Vietnam in 1789 had been thoroughly defeated, the Chinese were wary of getting involved with them.

During the 19th century, Chinese efforts to counter the pirates on Chinese soil were hindered by collusion between pirates and those in charge of suppressing them and by the inability and unwillingness of the Chinese provincial "navies" to undertake major maritime campaigns.

2. The Chinese system of foreign relations, known as the tribute system, was based upon a suzerain-vassal relationship between the emperor of China and the rulers of the participating countries. It was derived from the ancient Chinese practice whereby the emperor invested vassals from the outside with titles of rank and received from them offerings of local products as tribute. Derived from the theory that the moral force of the emperor served as a behavioral guide for the whole of human society, the Chinese believed that the emperor's virtue could be emulated by non-Chinese who chose to participate in the benefits of Chinese civilization. As late as the nineteenth century, China still clung to the notion of being at the center of the civilized world and demanded that all countries seeking relations accept tributary status, but by this time, however, tributary relations amounted to a highly ritualistic performance whereby China recognized the legitimacy of the tributary country by conferring upon their kings patents of appointment, going to their aid in times of foreign invasion, and sending relief in times of disaster. (Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 174-179).

Under this system, the Chinese formula for dealing with all foreigners—Westerners included—was to restrict their presence to a few isolated places on the coast and to reduce contact with them to a minimum. In 1557, for example, the Portuguese were confined to Macao, a small settlement located at the end of the Xiangshan (Hsiang-shan) peninsula ceded to them as a reward for aid in suppressing pirates.[3]

With regard to the British and other Westerners this was accomplished through a decree issued in 1756 which permitted individual merchants, unaccompanied by either wives or children, to remain in the factories of Guangzhou only during the trading season. During the remainder of the year, they resided in Macao at the sufferance of the Portuguese, from whom they rented summer headquarters and with whom they were almost always at odds. In these pre-treaty port days of the early nineteenth century, Hong Kong was but a malaria-infested fishing village, and the British were without a base or anchorage of their own.

To make matters worse, Europeans had no diplomatic standing vis-a-vis the Chinese government; for the trade, highly regulated and monopolistic though it was, was conducted by privately authorized merchants: on the British side, by the agents of the East India Company referred to as supercargoes, and on the Chinese side by the hong, or committee of merchants, assigned by the throne.[4] No formal diplomatic relations between China and the West existed and no direct contact between the supercargoes and government officials was allowed. Westerners could thus communicate with Chinese officials—Governors-general, Governors and Superintendents of Customs, more commonly known as Hoppos—only through the hong merchants, who might or might not agree to convey humbly-written petitions to their superiors.

The Chinese emperors, fearful of foreigners since the Song dynasty, had considered trade a part of foreign policy. These rulers were steeped in the belief that the Middle Kingdom was a self-sufficient empire. They traditionally regarded trade as an imperial privilege that could be withdrawn at the slightest provocation. In practice the theory worked, for threats to suspend the trade usually sufficed to bring the foreigners around to the Chinese point of view; and despite the inconvenience, foreigners acquiesced because the profits to be made in commerce far outweighed the difficulties of doing business with the government. In this way Chinese were still "managing" Europeans on the eve of the Opium War (1839-1842).

The rise of the pirates, however, presented a challenge that could not be formally contained within the bounds of the Tribute System. Yet the Chinese continued to proceed as though it could and endeavored to obtain what they wanted through time-honored traditions that called for playing one "barbarian" against another and doing so with a minimum of official involvement. The result was clogged communication channels that would undermine meaningful collaboration.

Nowhere were the consequences more telling than in the military sphere. Pirate attacks upon Western shipping, intermittent and sporadic in the 1790s, reached crisis proportions in 1804, when their occupation of the Taipa anchorage off Macao reduced the city to a two-day supply of rice.[5]

To counter this threat quick action was needed and Chinese officials, after much prodding, reluctantly allowed two Portuguese vessels to accompany a fleet of twenty war-junks on what would become an ill-fated anti-pirate patrol. With little time for consultation, the expedition hastily left Macao on April 25. After encountering several pirates, however, the participants returned empty-handed twenty-four days later with not so much as a captive to show for their efforts. According to the Portuguese, "fresh winds" and the Chinese practice of "keeping aloof" enabled the pirates to make their way into the shoals, whereupon those in pursuit, after firing several shots at too great a distance to have any effect, were forced to give up and return to port.[6]

Undaunted by the failure of their first endeavor, the Portuguese again petitioned the Hoppo, volunteering to fit out four ships at their own expense. The Chinese Governor-general, arguing that he already had more than 100 war junks and thus needed no additional craft

3. For an account of the founding of Macao, see C. A. Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao: International Traits in China Old and New* (Macao, 1926), pp. 22-37.

4. The Chinese court authorized 13 commercial firms known as hongs as the sole agents of foreign trade. The owners, known as the hong merchants, secured their privilege through contributions to the court.

5. Canton Consultations. Consultations and Transactions of the Select Committee of Resident Supercargoes appointed by the Honorable Court of Directors of the United East India Company to Manage their affairs in China together with Letters written and occurrences. Factory records G/12/100-G/12/174, March 1791 to January 1811. India Office, London. 3 April 1804.

6. Canton Consultations, 19 May 1804.

from the foreigners, rejected the offer. Repeated petitions, however, induced him to relent, and he grudgingly allowed the Portuguese to contribute two ships to a second mission.

The Chinese fleet arrived in Macao on 3 September 1804, set out in company with the Portuguese on 10 October, and remained at sea until early November. According to Portuguese reports, the mission proceeded to a bay west of Guangzhou, where more than 200 pirate junks were at anchor and could have been easily destroyed except for the fact that the Chinese commander, refusing to attack, busied himself instead by supplying the pirates with provisions from the shore.[7]

According to the Chinese commander, however, the draught of the Portuguese vessels allowed them to sail only in the deep waters of the outer ocean and as a result, they proved useless in pursuing pirates into the shoals.[8]

Although what really happened remains something of a mystery, it is clear that government indecision, poor planning, and a lack of communication between the two parties enabled the pirates to escape. Afterwards, the Governor-general memorialized the emperor who, outraged by the very idea of a collaborative endeavor, dismissed both the Governor-general and the Superintendent of Customs and instructed that never again should the Portuguese be similarly employed.[9]

While poor coordination thwarted Sino-Portuguese endeavors in 1804, denial of access to meaningful channels of communication left the British with little choice but unilateral action in the defense of their property. Throughout 1804, the British proceeded with caution. Despite the danger posed to their lightly-armed country ships, the British, reluctant to act on their own, sought instead to cooperate with the Chinese. On 8 October 1804, the supercargoes received from Captain Page, commander of the warships sent to convoy the merchantmen to England, an offer to employ his vessels against the pirates.[10] His proposal, forwarded to the Chinese merchants and transmitted by them to the officials, was, however, summarily dismissed by the Governor-general, who ridiculed the idea of the pirates' being too formidable for his own forces to suppress.[11]

Meanwhile the depredations continued as the pirates occupied the "Broadway" or outer passage of the Pearl River completely impeding all communication between Xiangshan and Macao and interfering with the traffic to such an extent that Captain Page's warships could no longer be safely supplied from Macao. Although Chinese law specifically forbade the anchorage of foreign warships within the "inner waters" of the Bogue estuary, the British supercargoes, in light of the gravity of the situation, took occasion to request a safer anchorage at the second bar, which was clearly within the inner waters.

Objecting to the idea on the grounds that he did not want to alter "the traditions of the empire," the Hoppo nonetheless agreed to forward the petition to the Governor-general. Two days later the supercargoes were informed of his decision: moving the ships to the second bar was inadmissible.

In the meantime, however, the difficulties of supply continued as Chinese marines made little attempt to drive the pirates from the river. Facing the prospect of no provisions, the British acted on their own by moving the warships within the Bogue estuary to Anson's Bay. The Hoppo refused to receive any further messages and there the matter remained as tension mounted, each side refusing to budge.[12]

Two years later, communication difficulties precluded joint military action of the magnitude necessary to obtain the release of Britain's first hostage. On 7 December 1806, Chief officer J. M. Turner and six seamen of the ship *Tay* were captured while en route to Macao for a pilot. On 27 December the supercargoes reported the matter to the Governor-general and implored him to seek their delivery.[13] By 1 January the government had dispatched an armed junk to seize the "freebooters."[14]

Two weeks later, however, when the Chinese endeavor had shown little sign of success, the hong merchants presented the foreign supercargoes an edict from the Hoppo charging that at the time of his abduction, Turner had been "engaging in a contraband commerce with the natives." Responding that the accusation was a

7. Canton Consultations, 3 September and 10 October 1804 and 16 March and 22 June 1805.

8. *Qing Jiaqing wai jiao shi liao* [Foreign relations of the Jiaqing reign]. 10 vols. (Beijing, 1932), 1: 21a-22b.

9. *Qing Jiaqing wai jiao shi liao* 1: 22b-23a; *Guangdong hai fang hui lan* [An Examination of sea-defense in Guangdong Province]. Comp. Lu Kun and Chen Hungchi. 42 *zhuan*, n.d. 36:16b.

10. Secret Consultations. Letters and Transactions of the Select Committee of the Honorable East India Company, 1803-1810 (vols. 2-5). China Records. India Office. London. 8 October 1804.

11. Secret Consultations, 26 October and 19 November 1804.

12. Secret Consultations, 19 November 1804.

13. Canton Consultations, 27 December 1806.

14. Canton Consultations, 1 January 1807.

"pretext unbecoming the government," the supercargoes bit their tongues and bided their time.[15]

However, when more than two months had elapsed with little evidence of action from the Chinese, the supercargoes again wrote to the Governor-general soliciting information as to whether they were "warranted in entertaining any hope of the captives being restored" through government action or whether they would have to depend on their own exertions.[16]

The following day they were informed that the Hoppo, after assuring them that the most strenuous measures were being effected for Turner's release, refused to pass along the supercargoes' letter to the Governor-general on the grounds that they had previously applied to him on the same matter.

Stymied on all fronts in their endeavors to deal with the Chinese and possessing a force insufficient to fight the pirates singlehandedly, the supercargoes found themselves with little choice but to capitulate to their demands.[17]

Yet, fully aware that paying ransom "might be attained with most serious inconvenience to lives and property of every European visiting China," the supercargoes delayed for a while longer.[18] Finally after pirate routs of the imperial navy twice again dashed their hopes for effective military action, the supercargoes, seeing no other option, capitulated to the pirates' demands.

With this action, precedent was set. Two years later, in September, 1809, when Richard Glasspoole, 4th officer of the *Marquis of Ely*, and his crew were captured in a cutter near Macao, the supercargoes grudgingly conceded that "though the thought of ransom is extremely objectionable, we see no other mode at present" and paid up.[19]

Frustration, however, could not help but take its toll and the result was a hardening of attitude on the part of the British that would ultimately raise their price for assistance to China.

By 1809 the pirates were nowhere closer to extermination than they had been at the time of Turner's captivity. If anything, the situation had intensified. With local defenses unable to keep them at bay, the pirates carried their activities to within a few miles of Guangzhou. By August the city itself was in a state of alarm as the pirates posted a notice of their intention to attack.[20]

Then on 5 September the crisis became even more acute as the pirates simultaneously blockaded three large junks of the Siamese tribute mission at the mouth of the Pearl River, drove five American ships to safety under the guns of Macao, and captured a brig belonging to the Portuguese Governor of Timor.[21] Chinese merchants and officials who a few years before had deemed the pirates "too contemptible to cause a moment's uneasiness" were suddenly in "great alarm."[22]

On 4 October the hong merchants asked that the country ship *Mercury* be fitted out to accompany their own forces. But by this time British zeal for cooperation had diminished. Throughout October negotiations faltered over British insistence on a written application from the Governor-general as a precondition for any aid. But the defeat of the Chinese Provincial Commander-in-chief at Shawan on 22 October lent new urgency to the situation and caused Chinese officials to renew their endeavors for an accord. Two days later the supercargoes received a written request from the Prefect of Guangzhou.[23] Contending however, that the status of the official was insufficiently high and that nothing less than an invitation from the Governor-general would suffice, the British declined.

October passed as the Chinese, unwilling to make a proper application for foreign aid, tried to cajole the British into accepting the offer from the prefect. The British, refusing anything less than an invitation from the Governor-general, held fast.

Finally on 2 November an interview between Governor-general Bai Ling and Captain Austin, com-

15. Canton Consultations, 16 January 1807.
16. Canton Consultations, 22 February 1807.
17. Canton Consultations, 25 February 1807.
18. Canton Consultations, 5 March 1807.
19. Canton Consultations, 28 September 1809.

20. Canton Consultations, 17 September 1809; Alexander Dalrymple, *Further Statement of the Ladrones on the Coast of China Intended as a Contribution to the Accounts Published by Mr. Dalrymple.* (London: Lane, Darling, 1812), p. 75.

21. Yuan Yonglun (Yuen Yung-lun). *Jing hai fen ji* [Record of the pacification of the pirates]. 2 *zhuan.* (Canton, 1830), 1: 17b; Canton Consultations, 1, 2, 5 September 1809, Gongzhong dang [Palace Memorial Archive] 015184, Jiaqing reign 14/8/23; Luis G. Gomes, *Paginas da historia de Macau,* (Macau: Noticias de Macau, 1966), pp. 140, 141; Jose Ignacio de Andrade, *Memoria dos feitos macaenses contra os piratas de China: e da entrada violenta dos iglezes na cidade de Macao* (Lisbon: Imprensa Reejia, 1824), p. 34; Montalto de Jesus, *Historic Macao,* p. 236.

22. Secret Consultations, 19 November 1804; Canton Consultations, 4 October 1809.

23. Canton Consultations, 6, 28 October 1809; The Chinese version of the request can be found in the Public Record Office London, FO 692/483/1.

mander of the HMS then in China, was arranged; but upon arrival at government headquarters in Guangzhou, the Captain found himself delayed for some time on frivolous pretenses. In the end, the meeting never took place at all owing, as Austin later discovered, to a dispatch from Macao in which the Portuguese, anxious to prevent a Sino-British alliance, humbly offered six vessels to the Chinese and spared the Governor-general having to face the Englishman.

Initiative passed temporarily to the Portuguese as the stage was set for the most surefire suppression mission of all. The pirates, having withdrawn from the river, were gathered in a bay off the north shore of Lantao Island. The plan was to encircle them and exterminate them with fire vessels. But by this time Sino-foreign relations had come the full circle as once again cooperation broke down and besieged pirates were able to escape.[24]

From the foregoing it is clear that bungled attempts at joint suppression prolonged the life of the pirates and raised the stakes of countering them significantly.

The evidence suggests that before 1805, a single Western vessel or two could have sufficed to patrol the "inner passage," protect foreign property, and keep open the channels of the river upon which foreigners depended. The problem was that Chinese officials were reluctant to allow such vessels to cruise on a regular basis.

Yet on those rare occasions when permission was granted, the pirate threat diminished appreciably. For example in 1804 after the rice crisis in Macao, the Portuguese fitted out two vessels to sail in front of the city. So successful were their endeavors that nearly a year later the British supercargoes had occasion to comment:

> On our arrival at Macao we learnt that the Ladrones [i.e., pirates] were no less formidable and dangerous than in the preceeding [sic] season. But owing to the Portuguese having stationed the grab ship which they purchased last season in the Taipa, they seldom make their appearance off the town.[25]

Similarly during a two-week period in 1809 when the *Mercury*, equipped with 20 cannon and 50 American volunteers, did sail in the company of a Chinese fleet, the results were astounding. No sooner did the expedition make its appearance than the pirates withdrew. With grape-shot the *Mercury* cleared the decks of those who approached and, according to one report, no pirate stood her fire after the first day. Eight vessels were destroyed and three pirates taken captive.[26]

Yet, for all its successes, the supercargoes remained mindful that a single vessel "could do but little against such numerous opponents."[27] For by then the pirate threat had escalated beyond the ability of either the Chinese navy or a solitary square-rigger to counter singlehandedly. Given the fact that imperial vessels could not be stationed everywhere along the coast and that the principal haunts of the pirates were in the offshore islands, among which it had not been "customary" or "practicable" for the Chinese to station troops, the supercargoes concluded, as early as 1807, that only through a joint effort could the pirates be exterminated.[28]

But as time went on, British enthusiasm for such ventures waned. Assessing the situation in November 1809, the supercargoes wrote:

> At the close of 1805-06 season we suggested detaching a force for their destruction. The situation now, however, is much altered. The force needed is considerably greater . . . [Moreover, the Chinese] unfriendliness of late precludes the propriety of our rendering that friendly assistance that we would formerly have done."[29]

Whether even a well-coordinated joint endeavor could have completely destroyed the pirates is unclear. It does appear if Chinese officials had allowed Western ships to participate with them in joint patrols of the Pearl River, that significant loss of life, property, and disruption to commerce might have been avoided.

It is also clear (although not necessarily to what extent because the data do not allow for either precise quantification or cause-effect correlation) that the longer the pirates prevailed the greater would be the cost of doing business. Indirect costs arose from the Chinese practice of underwriting major governmental undertakings largely through "voluntary contributions" exacted from those who would stand to benefit most directly from their completion. Consequently, Chinese officials repeatedly solicited from the hong contributions for pi-

24. *Guangdong hai fang hui lan* 42: 22a-23a; Canton Consultations, 23, 28 November 1809; Richard Glasspoole, "A Brief Narrative of My Captivity and Treatment Amongst the Ladrones." In the appendix of *History of the Pirates Who Infested the China Sea from 1807 to 1810*, trans. Charles Fried. Neumann (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1831), p. 123.

25. Canton Consultations, 16 March 1805.

26. Dalrymple, *Further Statements*, pp. 76, 84.

27. Canton Consultations, 3 October 1809.

28. Canton Consultations, 3 June 1807.

29. Canton Consultations, 27 Nov. 1809.

racy suppression which were then passed along to the Europeans. On October 13, 1805, the amount requested was 200,000 taels (Chinese silver weights) "to defray the expense of building and repairing forts and placing the country in a respectable state of defense."[30]

Other costs to the trade, an exchange that between China and Britain amounted annually to about 25 million taels alone, resulted directly from the pirates' interruption of it. Sometimes the result of such interruption was a dearth of goods for sale and skyrocketing prices for such staples as rice and salt. At other times the results were sluggish markets and low prices for the commodities Westerners wanted to sell.[31] Commenting on the state of affairs during the autumn of 1809, the supercargoes wrote:

> . . . the almost total stagnation of trade which the depredations of the freebooters had occasioned enabled us but imperfectly to judge the actual state of the market."[32]
>
> . . . Lead, we are sorry to say, is almost unsellable. The depression of the market for this article is said in some degree to arise from regulations prohibiting the exportation to the northern provinces by sea from apprehension of its falling into the hands of the ladrones.[33]
>
> . . . [Moreover] the trade in opium and every other article is likely to suffer more seriously from the increased force of the ladrones who have during the last three or four months been carrying on their depredations with much greater force and audacity than we have hitherto witnessed.[34]

On other occasions there were ceilings placed on the sale price for a given item. For example, in 1806 only 3,000 or 4,000 pounds of salt-petre could be imported into China because of large amounts "having fallen into pirate hands."[35]

In the final analysis, however, it may well be that the pirates' greatest impact on the Sino-foreign relations of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries was its "non-impact." That is to say, the pirate-engendered interaction between Westerners and Chinese in straining, but not totally demolishing, the operability of the tribute system, left it well enough intact so that the Chinese emerged from the episode unaware that their diplomatic house, like their coastal defenses, needed reordering.

Their world view unshaken, Chinese officials survived their bout with the pirates, believing their Mandate restored and their control of the coast secure. The opposite, however, was really the case. For, rather than serving to restore their Mandate, the pirate episode marked a major turning point in its loss. Thereafter the Qing were never able to regain full authority over a coast that would soon be the scene of even more turmoil as foreigners linked up with secret society members to smuggle opium. From there it was but a short step to the open confrontation of the Opium War (1839-42).

Thus some of the significance of this interlude must lie in what might have been. Had the Chinese been a little more flexible, they might have profited from the chance to have acknowledged the foreigners, appraised them realistically, and put to good use the technology they were willing to impart. But this was not to be. Sustained by the belief that their world was intact, the Chinese saw no reason to alter their traditions and as they groped to deal unilaterally with their most severe maritime threat since the seventeenth century, an era of goodwill and an opportunity for meaningful diplomacy passed them by unnoticed. What might have served as a last chance to get their house in order before the Opium War became, instead, a lost chance for China.

30. Canton Consultations, 13 October 1805.
31. Canton Consultations, 15, 25 October 1804 and 27 November 1809.
32. Canton Consultations, 4 November 1809.
33. Canton Consultations, 21 November 1809.
34. Canton Consultations, 3 October 1809.
35. Canton Consultations, 17 December 1806.

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The Failure of the Li-ch'uan Hong: Litigation as a Hazard of Nineteenth Century Foreign Trade

FREDERIC D. GRANT, JR.

MERCANTILE activity involves risk. For both Chinese and Western merchants engaged in foreign trade in the nineteenth century, the risk was quite high. Some sources of this risk are familiar: bad weather, shipwreck, piracy, ill health, unexpected drop in price, insolvency or the failure to pay, or being taken as a prize by a war ship. To the extent that foreign trade in the nineteenth century meant great gain, a gain not always enjoyed, the extraordinary risk involved may have justified the gain.[1] A less familiar element of risk was the modern peril of litigation. For the Li-ch'uan hong, which extended enormous amounts of credit to American merchants in the first decade of the nineteenth century, litigation in the distant United States meant the loss of much of its capital, and the destruction of the formerly flourishing business of the hong merchant Consequa.

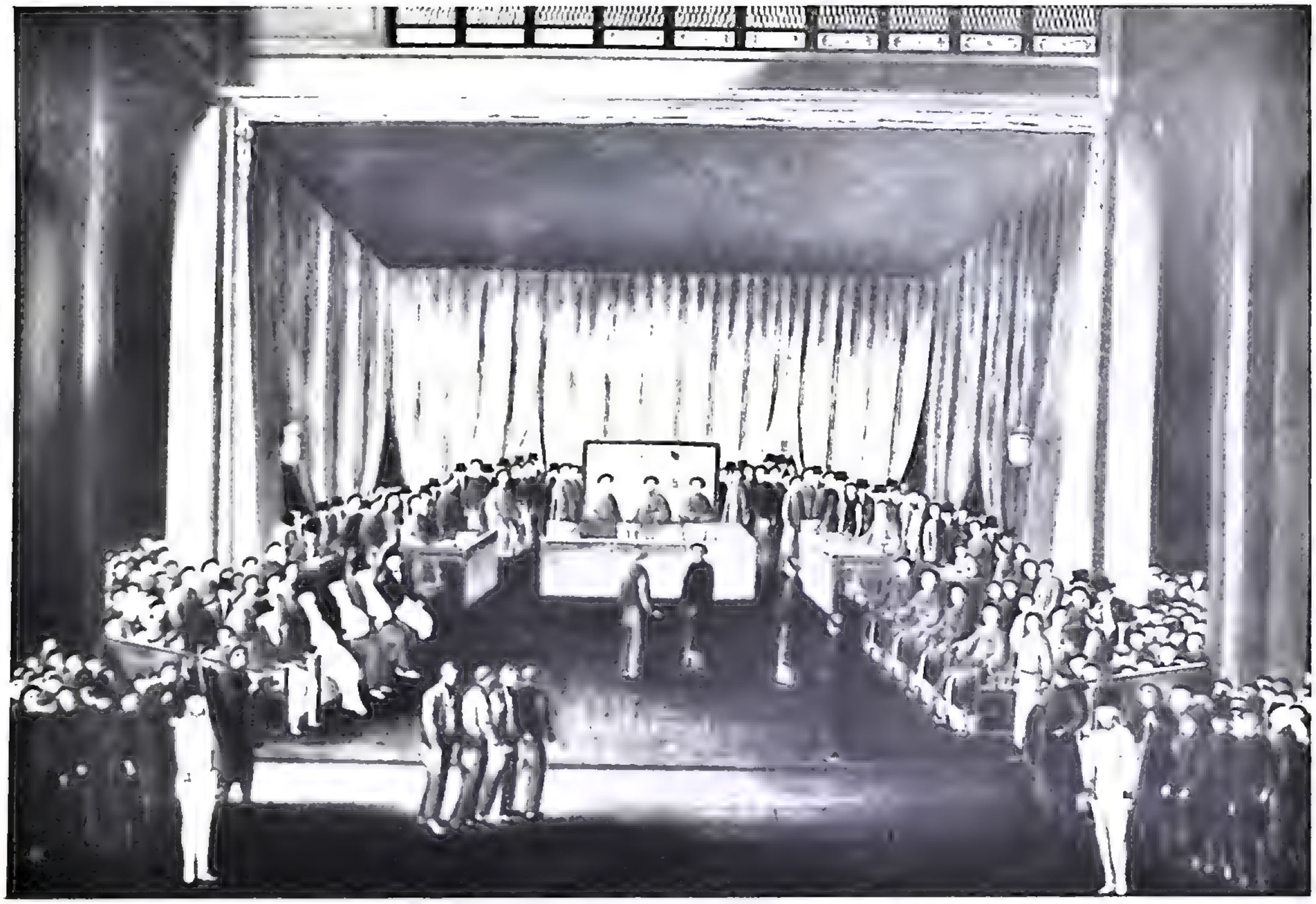
THE LI-CH'UAN HONG

Consequa [Pan Zhangyao (P'an Chang-yao), 3 December 1759-5 August 1823], a relative of the great hong merchant Puankhequa, had established himself in trade at Canton by at least the year 1794, at about the age of thirty-five.[2] The exact date is not clear, but it is apparent that he operated initially as one of the outside shopmen who violated the monopoly of the hong merchants.[3]

1. Allusion is made to a punning nickname based on the initials of the great New York firm of N. L. & G. Griswold, "No Loss and Great Gain." Richard C. McKay, *South Street: A Maritime History of New York* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1934), p. 94. In contrast, this paper includes numerous examples of losses incurred by Americans engaged in trade with China. The suggestion has been made that as much money was lost as was made by Americans engaged in trade with China in the nineteenth century. See Tyler Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia* (1922; rpt. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1941), p. 74 ("It is obvious that American commercial relations with China were valued not so much because of their present returns as for their future possibilities.").

2. Pan Zhangyao engaged in business under the trading name of Consequa, which was sometimes written as "Conseequa." Deposition of Consequa, 24 February 1807, in Girard v. Biddle, an action commenced in the Court of Common Pleas for Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, in September Term 1806, Stephen Girard Papers, Estate of Stephen Girard, deceased, microfilm copies on deposit with the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Reel 439 (Consequa's age is "forty eight years and upwards."). Felix Renouard de Sainte-Croix, *Voyage Commercial et Politique aux Indes Orientales* (Paris: Archives due Droit Francais, 1810), Vol. III, p. 155, 161 (Consequa was born on December 3). Hosea B. Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635-1834* (1926; rpt. Taipei: Ch'eng-wen, 1966), Vol. II, p. 261, Vol. IV, p. 73 (Consequa died on 5 August 1823). In Lo-shu Fu, *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1966), pp. 391, 610, Pan Zhangyao's trading name is inaccurately reformed as "Ponseequa," i.e., P'an (surname) + Conseequa (trading name). This cannot stand in the face of the use by P'an Chang-yao of "Consequa" as his trading name. See, for example, the signature on the Chinese text of the Petition of Conseequa, a Hong Merchant of the City of Canton in China, Canton, 10 February 1814, in Despatches from United States Consuls at Canton, Vol. I, National Archives, Washington, D.C., published in File Microcopies of Records in the National Archives, No. 101, Roll 1 (hereafter "Canton Consular Letters"); on the letter from Consequa to Peter Dobell dated Canton 3 April 1813, Breck Family Papers, Library Company of Philadelphia, on deposit with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and on a receipt included in the Edward Carrington Papers in the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island (see Appendix, "An Incomplete Tabulation of Consequa's Loans to Americans and Debt to the British East India Company," note 6).

3. From documentary evidence, it is clear that Consequa was in business no later than 1794. See Appendix. However, in his deposition given in February 1807 in the case *Girard v. Biddle*, Consequa states that he has resided in Canton for eleven years. Deposition of Consequa, 24 February 1807, in Girard v. Biddle, an action commenced in the Court of Common Pleas for Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, in September Term 1806, Stephen Girard Papers, Estate of Stephen Girard, deceased, microfilm copies on deposit with the American Philosophical Society, Reel 439. The case for an earlier date is supported by Bryant P. Tilden's account of a visit to Consequa's "splendid residence" on the Canton side of the river, in which he described numerous French decorative objects "which though now out of date as to fashion, having been presented to him by French officers of some distinction in the happier days of Louis the 16th—say—thirty odd years ago; he values them very *highly*." Bryant P. Tilden's journal, "Ship Canton 1st Voyage to China, 1815-1816," pp. 75-76, Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. The hong merchants were a group of private traders at Canton, China, nomi-



In a painting of the famous criminal trial of the *Neptune* sailors held at Canton on April 9, 1807, Consequa appears on the right side, closest to the defendants, as one of four seated hong merchant observers. This painting, possibly by Spoilum, may be the only surviving identified portrait of Consequa. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Salem.)

These business operations might either have been on his own, or possibly in cooperation with and under the cover of Puankhequa's T'ung-wen hong.

In late 1796, Consequa's "extensive business with Europeans," notably the British East India Company, "& his reputed wealth . . . attracted the notice of Government." He was arrested in December for trading without a hong chop, subjected to a heavy fine, and was obliged to assume hong status, with its attendant responsibilities, taxes, and additional exactions.[4] The new Li-ch'uan hong engaged in business with the British East India Company on a large scale.[5] The size of Consequa's American business is not so easily measured, but surviving records (primarily of transactions that resulted in disputes) establish a large American trade.

Consequa spoke French well, "having learned it when young from officers of French ships which came to Canton in former years much more frequently than they do now."[6] His English, the pidgin or business English of the Canton trade, was less polished.[7] Consequa com-

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nally thirteen in number, licensed by the government to conduct all of the seaborne foreign trade of China. See Ann B. White, "The Hong Merchants of Canton," Unpub. Diss., History, University of Pennsylvania, 1967.

4. Morse, *Chronicles,* Vol. II, p. 283.

5. Morse, *Chronicles,* Vol. II, pp. 282, 297, 317, 348, 391, 419, Vol. III, pp. 60, 105, 159, 191, 207, 244, 313, 350, and 371.

6. Journals of Bryant P. Tilden 1815-1829, p. 93, Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass.

7. Letter, Consequa (Canton) to Peter Dobell, 3 April 1813, Breck Family Papers, Library Company of Philadelphia, on deposit with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

plained that he had "too much plenty piece daughters." He had at least one son.[8]

Foreign merchant estimation of Consequa was mixed. The French thought highly of Consequa, and his Canton residence was decorated with many gifts presented by French officers.[9] Felix Renouard de Sainte-Croix described "Consequois" in November 1807, "c'est un des meilleurs."[10] The American view was more guarded. An agent of Thomas Handasyd Perkins of Boston described him as "very lavish of promises, very shuffling but rich and doing much business. Very liberal credit."[11] The Salem merchant Thomas W. Ward, writing in 1809 as Consequa's business crumbled, was more blunt. "Rich—roguish—insinuating—polite—sends some excellent cargoes—some bad Cargoes—not attentive enough to business and a man with whom you cannot talk with safety, as he will promise everything & perform what he pleases—not to be seen always."[12] Sullivan Dorr reported to Captain Amasa Delano on his frustrations obtaining tea in January 1803. "I have call'd and sent to Conseequa twenty times nearly with his acceptance for 40 Chests Souchong Tea not being able to procure the same I have left the Acceptance with William F. Megee Esqr. who will if the tea is obtaind ship the same to your address."[13] Nevertheless, if for no better reason than the freedom with which he was willing to provide credit, Consequa continued to do a great deal of business with Americans, and some Americans thought well of him. Consequa was friendly with Americans including Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, the Philadelphia merchant who was United States Consul at Canton from 1812 through the early 1820's, who expressed a high opinion of Consequa.[14]

The first quarter of the nineteenth century was a period of particularly high risk and reward for merchants engaged in foreign trade. Added risk came from years of Napoleonic Wars, of American Embargo, and the War of 1812. The blossoming of international commerce that followed this cycle of war folded into depression in 1819, which greatly reduced the volume of the renewed American trade. Revolts in Spanish America from 1809 to 1821 disrupted the flow of specie to Canton upon which the trade had so long depended.[15]

These strains made the weak position of the monopoly merchants of Canton still more difficult. Except for a few strong firms, whose owners were frustrated in their desire to retire from the trade, the consistent pattern of the hong merchants was one of financial insecurity. While they were officially limited in number to thirteen, the hong merchants were rarely in full strength at that number, and the size of the body was regularly reduced by bankruptcies. New merchants would be invited and not infrequently forced to join the monopoly in turn. Regular problems of the hong merchants included inadequate business capital, excessive debt, heavy taxes, and "squeeze"—official exactions for public emergencies, special projects, birthdays, and other worthy causes. While they were commanded not to borrow from foreign merchants, certain hong merchants found such loans impossible to avoid. With cash needed for advance purchases of teas, expenses of a going business, and duty and other payments to the officials at Canton, hong merchants sought money where it could be found.[16] The British East India Company and other foreign creditors, desiring both the continuation of the trade and the maintenance of positions of advantage in it, often found it in their interest to meet requests for credit.

8. Journals of Bryant P. Tilden 1815-1829, p. 95, Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass.; Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, p. 74; *Consequa v. Fanning*, 3 Johns. Ch. 587, 607 (N.Y. 1818). Consequa's feeling for his son impressed Chancellor Kent, who wrote, "His letters which have been read, so far from affording ground for crimination, may rather be cited as proofs of a frank and manly character. We have seen, in the case of his son, that he evidently cherishes tender feeling."

9. See Bryant P. Tilden's journal, "Ship Canton 1st Voyage to China, 1815-1816," pp. 75-76, Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass.

10. Renouard de Sainte-Croix, *Voyage*, Vol. III, p. 100.

11. Carl Seaburg and Stanley Paterson, *Merchant Prince of Boston: Colonel T. H. Perkins, 1764-1854* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 101.

12. Thomas W. Ward, "Remarks on the Canton Trade and the Manner of Transacting Business," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 73 (1937), pp. 303, 307.

13. Letter, Sullivan Dorr (Canton) to Amasa Delano, 17 January 1803, reprinted in Howard Corning, ed., "Letters of Sullivan Dorr," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 67 (1941-1944), pp. 178, 361.

14. Deposition of Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, Philadelphia 5 December 1810, in Consequa v. Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, October term 1809, No. 9, Records of the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Pennsylvania, Federal Archives and Records Center, Philadelphia (hereafter "Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania").

15. John D. Forbes, "European Wars and Boston Trade, 1783-1815," *New England Quarterly* 11 (1938), p. 709; Herbert J. Wood, "England, China, and the Napoleonic Wars," *Pacific Historical Review* 9 (1940), p. 139; Charles C. Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, Prior to 1820," *Pacific Historical Review* 9 (1940), pp. 425, 443; W. E. Cheong, "The Beginnings of Credit Finance on the China Coast: The Canton Financial Crisis of 1812-1815," *Business History* (Liverpool) 13 (1971), p. 87.

16. See W. E. Cheong, "Trade and Finance in China: 1784-1834: A Reappraisal," *Business History* (Liverpool) 7 (1965), pp. 36-37.

Hong bankruptcies invariably involved foreign merchant creditors.

The scale of Consequa's credit engagements with foreign traders, in the face of a shortage of cash at Canton,[17] led to financial problems. Traders at Canton sought top quality "first chop" teas, but such better grade teas were generally traded on a cash basis. Complaints about the quality of teas furnished on credit were common, and in turn provided an excuse not to pay the notes given for teas provided. Sullivan Dorr spoke of the British East India Company rejecting teas supplied by Consequa in 1798, describing Consequa as "a good adept at mixing teas."[18] Stephen Girard, one of the greatest of the Philadelphia merchants engaged in foreign trade by sea, described the problems involved in credit purchases of tea.

> I do not believe that a China merchant of good repute & credit who is particular in dealing in the best teas can purchase them even cash in hand as low as any other Chinese whose principal object is to obtain a long credit. This last character may possibly purchase teas at the lowest Cash price payle. at 2 or 3 years, consequently the difference in price will apparently be in his favor but in quality it will perhaps prove to be sum fifty to 60 Pr cent worse than the tea purchased by the Chinese merchant of good repute.[19]

As one of the few hong merchants who provided credit to foreigners, Consequa experienced difficulties in his credit transactions with Americans from an early date. Captain Joseph Ingraham's note to Consequa, made in 1793 on behalf of Thomas H. Perkins and other Boston merchants, was in default in the amount of $43,821 by May 1795. In his report of this default, and of his efforts to pay debts incurred by the late Captain Kendrick, John Howel stated that it was "absolutely necessary some steps should be taken to retrieve the character [i.e., reputation] of the Americans here. Such villanies have been practised as have sickened the Chinese from having any dealing with them on that liberal scale they would otherwise adopt."[20] Some five years later Sullivan Dorr warned his father, "Conseequa holds Jo. Ingraham's note. Warn your Captains of putting themselves in his power."[21]

In both 1800 and 1801 Consequa made at least thirty thousand dollars in loans to Americans.[22] Both years were remarked as unusual for the amounts of underweight and bad quality teas at market,[23] and 1800 saw Consequa fined as the security merchant for a British vessel that had been caught smuggling. A 50,000 tael ($69,400)[24] fine assessed by order from Peking made it impossible for Consequa to meet at least one commitment in 1801.[25] No records survive of loans made by Consequa in 1802, and there is some indication that Consequa was under financial pressure in that year. Sullivan Dorr wrote in February 1802 that the ship *Active* "still remains here in consequence of some difficulty with Conseequa the Hong Merchant who in every respect has behaved like a Scoundrel. The *Active* is the fourth Ship that has experienced a long detention from him."[26] Consequa made a $20,000 loan in 1803, and over $12,000 in loans to Americans in 1804.[27]

Efforts to Collect from American Debtors

As his credit transactions grew more extensive, Consequa enlisted the aid of merchants to collect debts in the United States. The greatest number of his debtors were in Philadelphia, but Consequa also collected debts in New York and elsewhere through John Jacob Astor and in Boston through an attorney maned Sullivan.

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17. See W. E. Cheong, "The Beginnings of Credit Finance on the China Coast: The Canton Financial Crisis of 1812-1815," *Business History* (Liverpool) 13 (1971), pp. 87, 95-96.

18. Letter, Sullivan Dorr (Canton) to Ebenezer Dorr, 10 September 1799, reprinted in Howard Corning, ed., "Letters of Sullivan Dorr," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 67 (1941-1944), pp. 178, 180.

19. Letter, Stephen Girard (Philadelphia) to Edward George and Samuel Nichols, 3 January 1810, Letter 428, Letterbook 11, Stephen Girard Papers, Estate of Stephen Girard, deceased, microfilm copies on deposit with the American Philosophical Society.

20. Letter, John Howel (Canton) to Joseph Barrell and others, 11 May 1795, reprinted in Frederic W. Howay, ed., *Voyages of the "Columbia" to the Northwest Coast*, Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, 79 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1941), pp. 489, 490; Seaburg and Paterson, *Merchant Prince*, pp. 100-101.

21. Letter, Sullivan Dorr (Canton) to Joseph Dorr and John Dorr, 9 November 1800, in Corning, "Letters," pp. 178, 231.

22. These are minimum totals calculated on the basis of surviving records located by the writer, many of which are in court files. See Appendix, "An Incomplete Tabulation of Consequa's Loans to Americans and Debt to the British East India Company."

23. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II, pp. 401-403, 417.

24. During the period covered by this article, the Spanish dollar (which traded as the silver equivalent of an American dollar) was treated in the accounts of the British East India Company as equivalent to taels 0.72. A tael therefore traded for 1.388 dollars. Morse, *Chronicles* (table of "Conventional Equivalents" at the front of each volume); Frank H. H. King, *Money and Monetary Policy in China 1845-1895* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 82. For a discussion of the complex and evolving relationship of the tael and the Spanish dollar, see King, pp. 69-90.

25. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. II, pp. 354, 365.

26. Letter, Sullivan Dorr (Canton) to Joseph Dorr and John Dorr, 28 February 1802, in Corning, "Letters," pp. 178, 306.

27. See Appendix.

Sullivan.[28] Explanation for the concentration in Philadelphia lies in that city's great importance as a mercantile center,[29] and perhaps also in the individual venture character of the China trade from Philadelphia, which tended toward one or two voyages generally, rather than continuing trade relationships over many years.

Merchants who assisted Consequa in Philadelphia included Peter Dobell, who advised Consequa initially at Canton, and later aided in collections at home.[30] Consequa's collection work in Philadelphia was also handled by George Emlen, whose Account Current for Consequa for the period 1805 to 1808 survives. Emlen records collections from April 1805, and various disbursements including the fees of the lawyer Charles Willing Hare.[31] In 1808 Consequa shifted his local collection work to Benjamin Chew Wilcocks. Emlen then held Consequa's power of attorney, which Wilcocks had witnessed when it was prepared at Canton, and under which John Jacob Astor of New York acted through a substitution. Astor indicated that he wished to substitute Wilcocks for himself in turn, "but counsel at New York were of opinion that Mr. Astor could not substitute," and Emlen would not make the substitution. In this year three merchants attached one half million dollars' value of Consequa's Philadelphia notes receivable through the Court of Common Pleas for Philadelphia County. Astor and Wilcocks retained three of the greatest Philadelphia lawyers of the era to defend the action, which continued until May, 1809.[32] Emlen did no more collection work for Consequa.

Consequa's adventures in the American courts began in the April 1804 term of the Circuit Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Making plain their intention to collect debts from reluctant Americans, Consequa and two other merchants, Eshing and Youqua, filed individual actions in this federal trial court seeking to collect on several notes made at Canton in 1801 by the firm of Morris, Greeves & Mifflin. Pleadings filed in these actions by the hong merchants' lawyer, John Hallowell, made use of a jurisdictional fiction which placed the City of Canton in Philadelphia, reciting agreements made "at Canton, to wit, at Philadelphia in the District aforesaid."[33] This fiction was used, without recorded challenge, in every American action brought by or against a hong merchant. Consequa sued on a note for $25,000, and the conclusion of the suit was a bad omen. Two of the defendants (not Morris) entered a plea in April 1805 "that they are certified Bankrupts, and that the cause of action accrued before their Bankruptcy."[34]

By the year 1805 Consequa appears to have recovered from earlier exactions and to be standing at the peak of his commercial powers. There are records of some $43,680.89 in new loans to Americans in this year,[35] and Emlen's lawyer, Charles Willing Hare, commenced three new actions in federal court in Philadelphia.[36] Each of these actions, brought on small notes made at Canton in late 1800 and early 1801, was concluded suc-

28. Deposition of Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, Philadelphia, 5 December 1810, in Consequa v. Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, October term 1809, No. 9, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania; Consequa v. Roger Smith, April term 1820, No. 6 (promissory note endorsed to John Jacob Astor), Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania; Entry dated September 1805 in Consequa's Account Current with George Emlen, Gratz Collection, Box 44, Case 14, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

29. Jonathan Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade 1682-1846* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), p. 67.

30. Letter, Edward Carrington (Canton) to William F. Megee, 25 November 1804, China Letterbook B, Edward Carrington Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island; Letter, Consequa (Canton) to Peter Dobell, 3 April 1813, Breck Family Papers, Library Company of Philadelphia, on deposit with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

31. Consequa's Account Current with George Emlen, Gratz Collection, Box 44, Case 14, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

32. Deposition of Benjamin C. Wilcocks, Philadelphia, 5 December 1810, and Declaration (Complaint) in Consequa v. Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, October term 1809, No. 9, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania (the lawyers were Alexander Dallas, Jared Ingersoll, and Charles Jared Ingersoll).

33. Initiated in the case of *Mostyn v. Fabrigas*, Cowper 161, 98 Eng. Rep. 1021 (1774) (Lord Mansfield, J.), which considered the Island of Minorca part of the City of London, in the parish of Saint Mary Le Bow in the Ward of Cheap, this legal fiction served to make Canton, China part of the City of Philadelphia, for the purpose of establishing jurisdiction in actions involving the commercial activities of Chinese merchants. See Alan Harding, *A Social History of English Law* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973), pp. 308-309; William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-1769; rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), Vol. III, p. 107 ("This [fiction] the citizens exclaim against loudly, as inequitable and absurd; and Sir Thomas Ridley hath very gravely proved it to be impossible . . . But our lawyers justify this fiction, by alleging before, that the locality of such contracts is not at all essential to the merits of them: and that learned civilian himself seems to have forgotten how such fictions are adopted and encouraged in the Roman law."); Robert W. Millar, *Civil Procedure of the Trial Court in Historical Perspective* (New York: The Law Center of New York University, 1952), p. 7 ("Few would question . . . the real value for the time and place . . ." of this fiction).

34. Consequa v. Morris, April term 1804, No. 37; Eshing v. Morris, April term 1804, No. 38; Youqua v. Morris, April term 1804, No. 39, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

35. See Appendix.

36. Consequa v. Edward Yard, April term 1805, No. 46; Consequa v. Hilary Baker, April term 1805, No. 47; Consequa v. Thomas Wiles, October term 1805, No. 60, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, third United States consul at Canton and a friend of Consequa, assisted the hong merchant in his efforts to collect amounts due from his American debtors. Portrait by George Chinnery. (Reproduced by courtesy of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.)

cessfully.[37] In November 1805 Consequa told William Read, a supercargo (ship's commercial officer) for the Philadelphia firm of Willings & Francis, that he was willing to make loans of from $100,000 to $150,000.[38] In the following months Consequa made one of the few clearly recorded purchases of opium by a hong merchant, nine boxes for the price of $11,972 from Willings & Francis' ship *Bingham*.[39] In the year 1806 Consequa made new loans and consignments of not less than $138,976.56,[40] and his Account Current with George Emlen shows almost $40,000 in payments on earlier notes for which no other records have been found.[41] This prosperity continued into the year 1807, the year in which Consequa was described by a French writer as one of the "better" hong merchants,[42] when he made over $50,000 in recorded new notes and consignments.[43]

Embargo and Attachment Threaten the Li-ch'uan Hong

Consequa's decline dates from late 1807. He was growing cross with the delays of his American debtors, and decided to hand overdue notes to his friend Benjamin C. Wilcocks at Canton, to bring them to America and see that they were collected. The Rhode Island merchant Edward Carrington, later United States Consul at Canton, described Consequa's resolve in a letter to Samuel Snow, one of Consequa's debtors, at Providence. Carrington had explained Snow's situation to the hong merchant, and asked that Snow be allowed one more season to meet his obligations, but "Conseequa pretended to be much disappointed and out of temper in the business." Consequa

had given the note [to] Mr. Wilcocks with many others to be sent to Ama. for collection. I then told him if he would retain it, I would write to you I could secure the money would come next season, he said no it would not do, that the notes must go. I spoke to Wilcocks, who applied to Conseequa on the subject, but without success. Your note, with Bently, B. Dexter and others in Rhode Island are forwarded by this oppy. to Messrs. R. H. Wilcocks & B. C. Wilcocks at Phila for Collections. Conseequa is very much out with the Ama. in consequence of heavy claims that have been urged against him for

37. Reflected in payments in 1807 carried in Consequa's Account Current with George Emlen, Gratz Collection, Box 44, Case 14, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

38. Letter, William Read (Canton) to Willings & Francis, 9, 27 November 1805, Willings & Francis Papers, 1805 folder, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

39. Account of sales of opium from the Ship *Bingham* dated Canton 28 December 1805, Willings & Francis Papers, 1805 folder, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, reproduced in Jonathan Goldstein, "Resources on Early Sino-American Relations in Philadelphia's Stephen Girard Collection and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 4 (1980), pp. 114, 121. Consequa's friend Gregory Baboom attended the sale on behalf of the hong merchant, and received an allowance on the sale for four boxes which he found "to be of a very inferior Quality." Statement of Gregory Baboom, dated 28 December 1805, Willings & Francis Papers, 1805 folder, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

40. See Appendix.

41. Consequa's Account Current with George Emlen, Gratz Collection, Box 44, Case 14, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

42. Renouard de Sainte-Croix, *Voyage*, Vol. III, 100.

43. See Appendix.

bad Goods furnished to them—he has become the most obstinate, pernicious Mercht. of the Hong, & it is almost impossible to move him when he takes a stand. I have been this particular lest you should think I had not attended to your requests.[44]

Wilcocks either travelled with or followed the notes to Philadelphia, where he "made application to" several debtors who provided him with $9,000 for Consequa. These funds, with other monies due to Consequa, were then sent to Canton, but Wilcocks believed that a "great part thereof was prevented by capture from getting into Conseequa's hands." He turned over unpaid notes to the lawyer Charles Jared Ingersoll. Wilcocks later received more notes and a power of attorney from Consequa. Finding that the makers of these notes had no money, he turned the notes over to Ingersoll.[45]

The year 1808 brought two large frustrations for Consequa's efforts to recover his money. On 22 December 1807 President Jefferson signed the Embargo Act, which was to hold American shipping in port until March 1809. Equally frustrating was the legal response by Consequa's debtors to his collection initiative. Edward Dunant and Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, who had claims against Consequa arising from poor quality teas furnished to them in 1805, caught wind of the hong merchant's new collection effort and immediately acted to hold Consequa's assets in Philadelphia. They brought two actions in the Court of Common Pleas for the First District of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, founded on claims of $20,000 and $30,000 respectively, and secured a writ of foreign attachment. On 2 April 1808 the Sheriff proceeded to attach and did attach "all the goods chattels rights and credits of the said Consequa" in the hands of twenty merchants, with property in the hands of a twenty-first merchant being reached two days later. The value of that attachment was a half million dollars, ten times the amount of damages claimed in the Common Pleas actions. This figure is important historically both as a statement of the great size of hong merchant credits in one city, and as a certain indication that Consequa's outstanding loans were far greater than indicated by surviving records. The attachment, which prevented the merchants from paying, and Consequa's agents from collecting, any of the amounts due, was maintained until 22 May 1809.[46]

Between attachment and embargo, Consequa's business found itself under severe strain. While there are records of a $50,000 consignment and of a loan of almost $40,000 in 1809,[47] Consequa's debt to the British East India Company that year reached the staggering total of 670,769 taels ($931,027.37).[48] Legal threats during the attachment period took their toll. Edward Gray, a merchant who had been subject to the attachment both individually and in the name of his business partnership, and paid his debt to Consequa, wrote to the hong merchant Chunqua in March. "Conseequa will have no more business with this place. You and Houqua will do all."[49]

After the attachment was lifted in May 1809, Wilcocks tried to collect as many of the debts as he could and send the funds to Canton. Charles Jared Ingersoll commenced nine actions for Consequa in federal court in Philadelphia in the October term of 1809.[50] Three suits were filed against Consequa in the same term.[51] Wilcocks received more notes from Consequa, and on failure to collect these he turned them over to Ingersoll, who initiated a second round of still less successful collection actions in 1810 and 1811.[52]

44. Letter, Edward Carrington (Canton) to Samuel Snow, 19 January 1808, China Letterbook F, Edward Carrington Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society. In contrast, the hong merchant Mouqua agreed to hold Snow's notes until the next season. See Jacques M. Downs, "A Study in Failure—Hon. Samuel Snow," *Rhode Island History* 25 (1966), pp. 1, 5. As Snow's firm, Munro, Snow & Munro, had failed over a month before Carrington wrote Snow, it is unlikely that either Consequa or Mouqua were ever repaid in full.

45. Deposition of Benjamin C. Wilcocks in Consequa v. Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, October term 1809, No. 9, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

46. Declarations (complaints) in Consequa v. Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, October term 1809, No. 9, and Consequa v. Edward Dunant, October term 1809, No. 33, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania. The declarations specifically list the merchants summoned as garnishees by the sheriff, but offer little detail of the underlying common pleas action. The records of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas for this period, which should be in the Office of the Prothonotary, Philadelphia, do not appear to have survived.

47. See Appendix.

48. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 100. Morse does not indicate Consequa's debt in the years before 1809.

49. Letter, Edward Gray (Philadelphia) to Chonqua (Chunqua), 29 March 1809, Gratz Collection, Box 44, Case 14, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

50. Consequa v. Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, No. 9; Consequa v. John Meany, No. 11; Consequa v. Caleb Ash, No. 26; Consequa v. Henry Toland, Jr., No. 27; Consequa v. Ash & Toland, No. 28; Consequa v. Edward Dunant, No. 33; Consequa *et al.* v. Benjamin Wilcocks *et al.*, No. 38; Consequa v. Willings & Francis, Nos. 49 & 50; Consequa v. Ralph Peters, No. 71, October term 1809, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

51. Redwood Fisher v. Consequa, No. 30; Joshua and Thomas Gilpin v. Consequa, No. 31; Edward Dunant v. Consequa, No. 32, October term 1809, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

52. Consequa v. Francis Pasquier, No. 10; Consequa v. Robert Bridges, No. 33; Consequa v. George Howell, No. 52, October term

Claims Underlying the Philadelphia Attachment

Remarkable among the actions filed in 1809 were suits against Dunant and the Gilpins for damages arising from the attachment, and suits brought to recover the damages that had initially occasioned the attachment. Consequa's declarations in his suits recite the fact of the sweeping attachment, the only surviving account due to the loss of the records of the Court of Common Pleas and lack of newspaper coverage, as it had been "maintained and continued falsely, maliciously and without cause" for over thirteen months. In each action, Consequa sought $100,000 in damages plus $50,000 in lost interest.[53]

The actions which Dunant and the Gilpins pressed in turn against Consequa were all founded on claims for poor quality teas furnished in late 1805.[54] The merchants had invested in a cargo of about $80,000 in specie and $14,000 in ginseng on the *Pennsylvania Packet,* which reached Canton late in the season of 1805 with two supercargoes, Redwood Fisher and James Read, Jr., who had never been to China before. The ship was secured by Consequa, and agreements were made with him to supply the ship with a cargo of top quality teas, intended for the Amsterdam auction market via Philadelphia. Benjamin C. Wilcocks, who was then at Canton, stated in his deposition that

> The Pennsylvania Packet arrived late in the season after most of the regular ships had sailed. There were teas of very bad quality at market that year, and most of the good teas had been bought up and shipped away in regular season, before the Pennsylvania Packet arrived.

Wilcocks described Redwood Fisher's abortive attempt at ginseng smuggling, "without as deponent believes the consent or participation of James Read Junior the other Supercargo." Fisher's agents were caught by the authorities. Consequa could have settled the matter for a small fine, probably a few hundred dollars, if Fisher would only have admitted his involvement, but instead he "continued to deny it most positively to Conseequa, during a considerable time, until the transaction became so notorious that it was impossible to conceal it any longer when finally Redwood Fisher confessed to it." By this time the authorities had halted the business of the ship, and Consequa "was compelled to pay the hoppo or custom house, a large Sum of money according to deponent's recollection, between sixteen and eighteen thousand dollars, but deponent is not certain as to the precise sum which money was afterwards repaid by Redwood Fisher to Conseequa."[55]

Of these several actions, which appear to have been treated as joint cases by counsel and the court, the resolution of the suits between Dunant and Consequa is not recorded. Consequa's action against the Gilpins was discontinued at the time the Gilpin suit went to trial.[56] The jury gave the Gilpins a verdict for $5,556, considerably less than the $22,000 sought in the federal court action, or the $30,000 sought in the initial Common Pleas suit. No appeal was taken.[57]

Claims Asserted by Willings & Francis

One other extended litigation grew out of Consequa's several actions brought in 1809. His suit against the firm of Willings & Francis on several notes inspired three countersuits the following year, and remained in court until 1816.[58] The disputes grew out of the alleged provision of poor quality teas, and are unusual in that two of the three voyages at issue were very poorly managed. One set of problems arose from teas furnished to the ship *Ganges,* which reached Canton after unsuccessful efforts to trade elsewhere, without sufficient funds. In a deposition by Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, who was at Canton when the *Ganges* arrived, he states that there had been a disagreement between Mr. Miller the supercargo and another officer, and that they arrived "on bad terms, and neither of them had ever been at Canton before this occasion." Wilcocks introduced Miller to Consequa as the merchant who had previously done the

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1810; Consequa v. John Ansley, No. 39, October term 1811, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

53. Declarations in Consequa v. Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, No. 9, and Consequa v. Dunant, No. 33, October term 1809, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

54. Joshua and Thomas Gilpin v. Consequa, No. 31; Edward Dunant v. Consequa, No. 32, October term 1809, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

55. *Gilpins v. Consequa,* 10 F. Cas. 420, 421 (C.C. D. Pa. 1813) (No. 5, 452); Deposition of Benjamin C. Wilcocks, Philadelphia, 5 December 1810, in Consequa v. Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, October term 1809, No. 9, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

56. Notice of discontinuance dated 12 April 1813, in Consequa v. Joshua and Thomas Gilpin, October term 1809, No. 9, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania,

57. *Gilpins v. Consequa,* 10 F. Cas. 420, 424 (C.C. D. Pa. 1813) (No. 5, 452).

58. Willings & Francis v. Consequa, No. 26; Willings & Francis and Charles Kuhn v. Consequa, No. 27; Willings & Francis and Joseph Curwen v. Consequa, No. 28, April term 1810, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

Packing, inspection, and negotiation for the purchase of teas by Western merchants at Canton, China. Gouache on paper by an unknown Chinese artist. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Salem.)

business of Willings & Francis at Canton, and Consequa secured the *Ganges* and provided it with a cargo. Miller annoyed Consequa by rejecting quantities of tea that he recommended, "because he did not like their quality."[59] Another deponent, who arrived at Canton and secured with Consequa in 1805 while the *Ganges* was still in port, described part of the transaction.

> On one occasion a very considerable quantity of black teas was spread out on the floor of the hong, in tiers, to be examined, marked and numbered for the Ganges—Deponent saw the teas spread out, occupying very nearly the whole hong, so as to prevent deponent from doing any business there for two or three days—The hong or pack house is a large store, several hundred feet long and fifty or sixty feet wide, the lower floor of which was nearly all occupied by the said teas . . . And deponent heard Conseequa complain that Mr. Miller after occupying the hong so long had refused to take some of the teas, which he/Conseequa/recommended and had taken others in their stead of his own/Miller's/preference.[60]

Wilcocks understood that not only had Miller taken a very large credit to acquire the teas, but that before the

59. Deposition of Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, Philadelphia, 31 May 1811 in Consequa v. Willings & Francis, October term 1809, No. 49, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

60. Deposition of Charles Ross, Philadelphia, September 5, 1810, in Consequa v. Willings & Francis, October term 1809, No. 49, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

Ganges sailed there had been "a disagreement between Miller and Conseequa as to the extent of the credit, which Conseequa said he did not expect would be so large."[61]

A second set of claims resulted from poor quality teas furnished to William Read, supercargo of the *Bingham,* in late 1805. Read wrote Willings & Francis on arrival at Canton that he had rejected Mr. Rabinel the tea examiner's two percent fee, as "far beyond what I thought the services to be rendered merited." He felt confident of an ability to make "such a selection of Teas as will render his assistance of little consequence."[62] Read wrote again on the day the *Bingham* was to sail. "The Cargo I have no doubt will prove a good one as I have taken great pains in the choice of my teas and I have every reason to be satisfied with the conduct of the security merchant Conseequa." Read had not used Rabinel's services because he would not reduce the fee, and innocently reported that Rabinel "however informs me he has written a letter to his friends in Holland which may be of use in the Sales of the Cargo, and regrets he could not render you the services you wished, and on such terms as would answer your expectations, and consistent with his own and the Interest of the Gentn. his assistants in the Factory."[63]

Sizeable claims were presented by Willings & Francis, based on poor quality teas alleged to have been furnished to their ships, as offsets to the amounts of notes given for the teas. The Willings & Francis litigation produced three reported decisions in the federal court,[64] and concluded with a jury verdict on 6 November 1816, allowing no damages for the *Ganges,* $46,502 in damages for the *Bingham*'s cargo, and $13,632 damages and interest for the cargo of the *Asia.* Willings & Francis still owed Consequa $71,183.57.[65]

61. Deposition of Benjamin C. Wilcocks, Philadelphia, 31 May 1811, in Consequa v. Willings & Francis, October term 1809, No. 49, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

62. Letter, William Read (Canton) to Willings & Francis, 9 November 1805, Willings & Francis Papers, folder 1805, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

63. Letter, William Read (Canton) to Willings & Francis, 10 December 1805, Willings & Francis Papers, folder 1805, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

64. *Willings v. Consequa,* 30 F. Cas. 52 (C.C.D. Pa. 1815) (No.17,766); *Consequa v. Willings,* 6 F. Cas. 336 (C.C.D. Pa. 1816) (No. 3, 128); *Willings v. Consequa,* 30 F. Cas. 55 (C.C.D. Pa. 1816) (No. 17, 767).

65. Willings & Francis v. Consequa, October term 1810, No. 28, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania (statement of jury award dated 6 November, 1816); *Willings v. Consequa,* 30 F. Cas. 55, 62 (C.C.D. Pa. 1816) (No. 17, 767).

Continued Litigation and Efforts of the Hong to Survive

After the questionable success of the round of litigation commenced in 1809, Consequa commenced four new lawsuits in 1810 and 1811.[66] One new action was brought against him in a state court in 1811.[67] The poor results of these lawsuits were predictable. One was against Francis Pasquier, who had made a $3,627.50 note at Canton on 8 August 1801, and one $1,210.54 payment on 9 May 1805. In April, 1811 Pasquier confessed judgment in the amount of $5,782.37, and by the following June had been imprisoned for debt. Pasquier successfully petitioned Judge Richard Peters for the benefit of the Act for the Relief of Persons Imprisoned for Debt, pleading lack of property, and the marshall was directed to release him from prison on 12 July 1811.[68] An action against the administrator of the estate of Robert Bridges, on his $10,000 note made in 1804, brought a plea of no assets.[69] The result of the suit brought against George Howell on his $3,410.50 note made on 26 November 1798 is not recorded,[70] but the age of the note alone suggests that it too was probably unsuccessful. The action brought against John Ansley on his $1,752 note in October term 1811 brought a confession of judgment in the amount of $2,430.90, with a stay of execution until December, 1812.[71]

The slow and indifferent results of the actions commenced in 1809, and the poor results of the litigation cycle of 1810-1811, are reflected in continued hard times

66. Consequa v. Francis Pasquier, No. 10; Consequa v. Robert Bridges, No. 33; Consequa v. George Howell, No. 52, October term 1810; Consequa v. John Ansley, No. 39, October term 1811, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

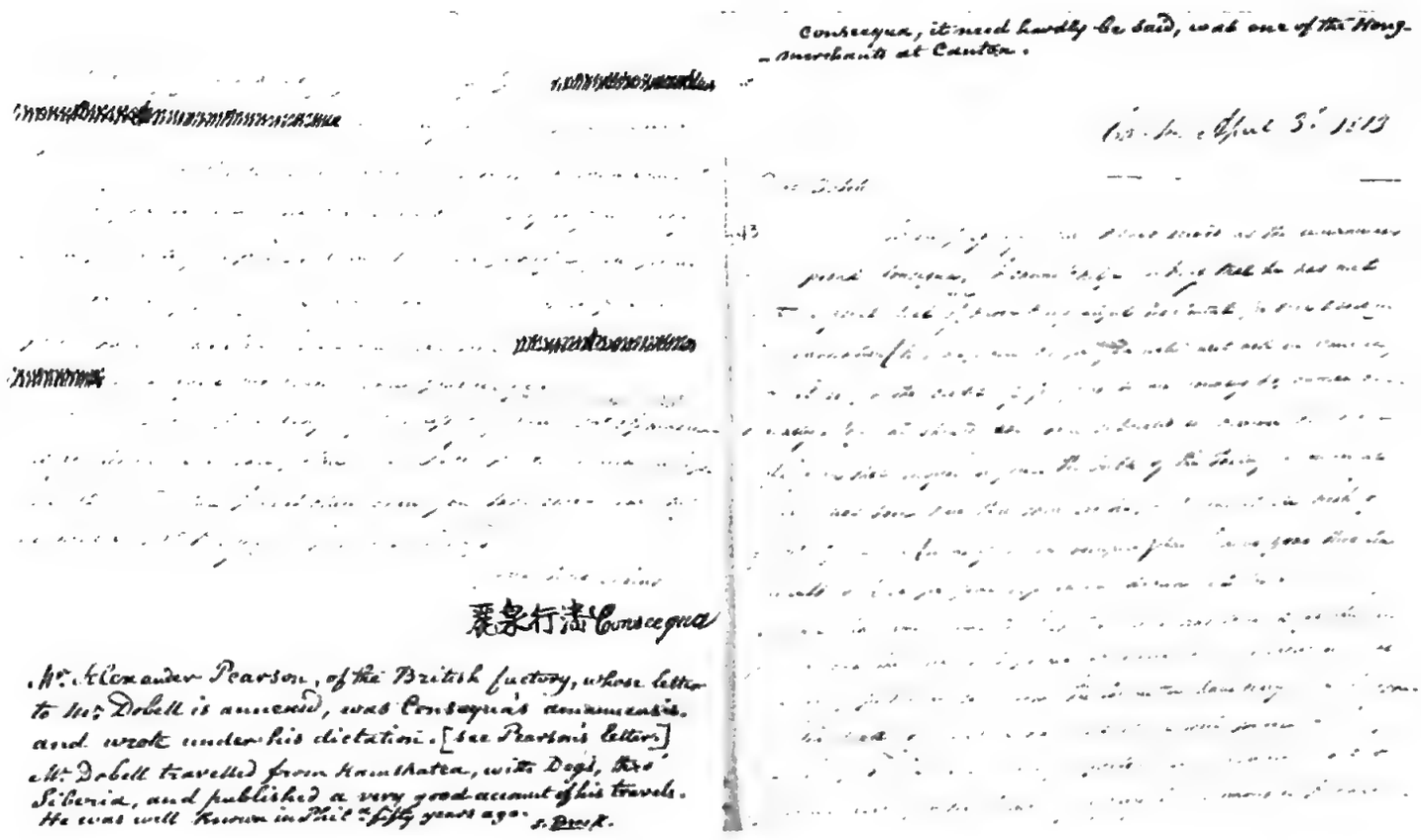
67. *Redwood v. Consequa,* 2 Browne 62 (Pa. Dist. 1811).

68. Consequa v. Francis Pasquier, October term 1810, No. 10, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania; Consequa's Account Current with George Emlen, Gratz Collection, Box 44, Case 14, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (entry dated 9 May 1805). Although the declaration in Consequa v. Pasquier does not credit the 1805 payment, it is clearly reflected in the amount of the confession of judgment given in that action. Judge Peters had earlier declined an offer of appointment to the United States Supreme Court. Stephen B. Presser, "A Tale of Two Judges: Richard Peters, Samuel Chase, and the Broken Promise of Federalist Jurisprudence," *Northwestern University Law Review* 73 (1978), pp. 26, 100.

69. Consequa v. Robert Bridges, October term 1810, No. 33, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

70. Consequa v. George Howell, October term 1810, No. 52, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

71. Consequa v. John Ansley, October term 1811, No. 39, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.



The second page of Consequa's vandalized letter to Peter Dobell dated April 3, 1812, with the addition by Alexander Pearson, surgeon to the factory of the British East India Company and one of Consequa's British trustees. (Reproduced from the Breck Family Papers, on deposit with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, by permission of the Library Company of Philadelphia.)

for Consequa in Canton. While there are records of consignments and loans to Americans totalling $71,198 in 1810 and $35,711 in 1811,[72] Consequa's debt to the British East India Company stood at 610,626 taels ($847,548.88) in 1810.[73] In August, 1811 Peter Snow described the condition of the hong merchants in a letter to Edward Carrington. "The Hong Merchants with a few exceptions as you may have anticipated before your departure are in a bad state—all but Mouqua Houqua and Chunqua are unable to pay their duties, and some of them I am told are in want even of the common necessaries of life." He spoke of an outside shopman. "Old Tuckee pays me a visit about once a week—he says that China Man this time to muche hot for money—and chin chins hard for your ship to come—I tell him no fear. He heaves a heavy sigh and departs."[74]

By the end of 1812 the Li-ch'uan hong was on the verge of collapse, with its debt to the British East India Company alone standing at $822,906.[75] In January, 1813 Consequa and four other junior hong merchants were obliged to appeal to their foreign creditors, who agreed to a plan placing their affairs in the hands of three trustees. In return for an agreement to stop calculating interest on the hong merchants' debts, which by Chinese law could not be collected if in excess of the principal amount, the junior merchants agreed to devote all the profits of their businesses to reducing these

72. See Appendix.

73. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 130.

74. Letter, Peter W. Snow (Canton) to Edward Carrington, 11 August 1811, Edward Carrington Papers, Box 13, Rhode Island Historical Society.

75. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, pp. 183, 247.

debts.[76] That June, due to continued business difficulties and new official exactions, Consequa again found himself obliged to appeal for aid to meet duty payments. The junior merchants were under such pressure that some were borrowing at forty percent interest.[77]

In April, 1813 Consequa wrote his friend Peter Dobell in Philadelphia, complaining about his financial and legal problems. The letter, in pidgin English with an addition by Alexander Pearson (one of Consequa's trustees),[78] survives in vandalized condition.

> I have very trouble because all that money America gentlemen owe for me. . . . I have see hardly any money, now I have very much trouble, owe so much money, no can pay I fear broke. Mr. Ingersoll I know very good man, very good head, only I fear [words deliberately obliterated] talk story so have spoil me too. Paper along with this can show how much money, who man owe, I chin chin you look—take care.

Pearson added,

> For the foregoing I have served as an amanuensis to your friend Conseequa. I cannot help thinking that he has met with a great deal of more harsh & ungrateful treatment for such liberality of accommodation (to some whom I hope you will not meet with in America) than it is for the credit of foreigners to this country & of human natives generally, that he should have been subjected to, however I need not amplify on that subject to you.[79]

An estimate of Consequa's Philadelphia losses as of 1813 is supplied by a letter in the Jardine Matheson Archive in Cambridge, England, which states that Consequa lost his fortune because he had lent 300,000 liang of silver to the Wilcocks brothers.[80] A liang is the weight of silver equivalent to a tael, and the dollar equivalent for this quantity is $416,400,[81] an amount resembling the amount attached (of which good part doubtless became uncollectable) by Dunant and the Gilpins during the period of the American Embargo. The reference to the Wilcocks brothers is likely a confusion of their role in the collection of overdue accounts for the hong merchant, motivated perhaps by an animus resulting from Benjamin Chew Wilcocks' strong role in the vigorous American mercantile competition with the British East India Company.

76. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, pp. 183, 311; George T. Staunton, *Ta Tsing Leu Lee* (1810; rpt. Taipei: Ch'eng-wen, 1966), p. 158.

77. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, pp. 195-197.

78. Pearson was surgeon to the factory of the British East India Company. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 183.

79. Letter, Consequa (Canton) to Peter Dobell, 3 April 1813, Breck Family Papers, Library Company of Philadelphia, on deposit with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (several lines of text of the letter have been heavily lined over in black ink).

80. Fu, *Documentary Chronicle*, p. 610, note 166.

81. King, *Money*, p. 70. See note 24.

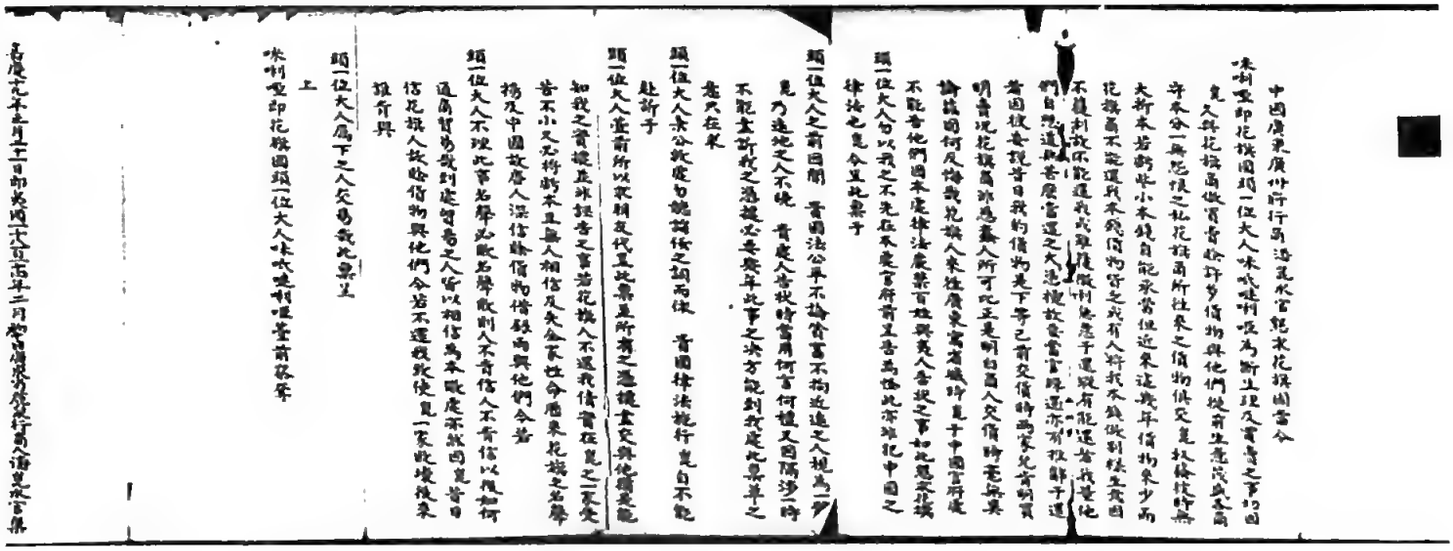
Consequa Appeals to President Madison

In February of 1814 Consequa, perplexed by the American legal process and under mounting financial pressure, addressed an appeal directly to President Madison. This important letter survives in the National Archives in its Chinese original, together with contemporary English and Portuguese translations. There is no record of action taken in response to the appeal, or that any reply was made to Consequa's letter.

The English text of "The Petition of Conseequa, a Hong Merchant of the City of Canton in China," recites the fairness of Consequa's dealings, the willingness with which he had granted credit to Americans, and objects to the treatment he has received from his debtors. "Many who do not labour under inability to pay their debts, or who do not acknowledge that they are unable, object to pay them, as he thinks upon frivolous grounds, and involve the Claims upon them in tedious litigation. When such Debtors come to, or reside in China, he cannot claim the aid of the Laws of the Imperial Dynasty in his behalf. They prohibit such confidences, as he has placed in Subjects of the United States."[82] A full modern translation of the Chinese text provides more detail of the Petition of P'an K'un (Consequa) than Madison could have read.

> When the American merchants (who owe me money) come to Kwangtung and live in Canton, K'un cannot accuse them, because the law of our country prohibits Chinese subjects from accusing the barbarians. This is why K'un must beg Your Excellency, the President of the United States, since K'un hears that the law of your noble country is impartial, and that no matter whether a man is rich or poor, an American or an alien, everyone is equal before the law. K'un is an alien from a remote region and ignorant of the usages and forms proper to presenting his case to your honorable country. Again, because great distance lies between us, I cannot present all my evidence (that the American merchants owe me money) to you. Therefore, your decision on this case may reach me after an interval of several years. The reason for presenting this petition is to appeal to Your Excellency for an impartial judgment.
>
> I hope Your Excellency will not listen to the one-sided story of your dishonest merchants, but judge the issue fairly. . . . If

82. Petition of Conseequa, a Hong Merchant of the City of Canton in China, Canton, 10 February 1814, Canton Consular Letters. Dennett, *Americans*, p. 86.



The Chinese text of the Petition of Consequa, A Hong Merchant of the City of Canton in China, dated February 10, 1814.

the American merchants do not return my money, then my whole family will suffer substantially. Not only will I lose my principal for continuing my business, but foreign merchants will not have any faith in me.

Consequa said that he had asked an English friend to present his petition and evidence, which he hoped the President would act on both for his sake, and in the interest of the reputation of American citizens in China.

Formerly, I trusted the Americans. I therefore sold goods to them on credit. If they do not return the price of my goods, they will cause the bankruptcy of K'un's family. In the future, who will trade with the subjects of Your Excellency, the President of the United States?[83]

The Last Years of the Crippled Li-Ch'uan Hong

Early in 1815 an imperial censor was provided information by a secret informant, upon which he based a memorial to the throne denouncing the junior hong merchants as insolvent. The Viceroy of Canton was commanded to investigate, and he ordered the seven junior hong merchants to provide statements of their foreign debts and of the time required to discharge the debts. Consequa stated a debt of 228,905 taels ($317,720.14), and sought four years to discharge it.[84] Two years later, in March 1817, Consequa's debt to the British East India Company stood at $333,126.[85]

83. Fu, *Documentary Chronicle*, pp. 391-393.
84. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, pp. 233-234.
85. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 247.

Consequa made two further attempts to collect large debts through the American courts. In October term 1816, he sued "William Read, merchant of Philadelphia" in federal court on a string of notes made in 1805 and 1806, and since unpaid.[86] In November 1816 Read filed an affidavit and a bill for an injunction to stay proceedings in the suit, which were held up for an answer from Canton.[87] In January, 1813, Consequa had brought suit in the New York State Court of Chancery, before the famed Chancellor Kent, on a number of notes made and consignments sent to Fanning & Coles of New York City. In January 1818 the Master appointed in the action allowed Consequa $104,457.91, and Kent then granted the defendants' petition for a rehearing.[88] He proceeded through their objections with manifest annoyance ("The defendants, in addition to all these unfounded charges, state . . ."), and ridiculed assessment of freight charges for shipping a cow to Canton. "Considering the terms of the acknowledgment, the trifling

86. Declaration in Consequa v. William Read, October term 1816, No. 15, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania. Consequa's forebearance in suing on notes that came due in twelve to eighteen months may be contrasted with the more aggressive stance of the outside merchant Kingling, who sued Read and his partners promptly in 1806 upon default in payment of a $2,500 demand note made on 20 March 1805. Kingling v. Read, April term 1805, No. 68, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

87. *Read v. Consequa*, 20 F. Cas. 350, 351 (C.C.D. Pa. 1821) (No. 11, 606).

88. *Consequa v. Fanning*, 2 Johns. Ch. 481 (N.Y. 1817); *Consequa v. Fanning*, 3 Johns. Ch. 364 (N.Y. 1818); *Fanning v. Consequa*, 17 Johns. 511 (N.Y. Court of Errors 1820).

value of the article, and the extensive business in which the parties were engaged, I should infer, that this cow was intended, and received, as a gift, and that the defendants had, afterwards, most ungraciously turned it into a charge."[89] Chancellor Kent upheld the assessment of interest according to the twelve percent rate prevailing at Canton, citing in support the then-recent translation by Sir George Staunton of the Ch'ing dynasty statutes.[90]

> It is no wonder that the plaintiff should think so seriously of the failure to pay interest, since the non-payment of interest subjects the debtor, by the *Chinese* laws, to corporal punishment. (*Staunton's Ta Tsing Lew Li*, s. 149.) He, also, in that letter, admits, that he insisted on twelve, instead of ten, per cent., but he tells them, 'I refused, and would have done the same, had either, or all of you, gentlemen, been present, and made the settlement yourselves.[91]

Kent upheld the Master's report with minor changes. On appeal, the award of interest at the Canton rate was reduced by the New York Court of Errors to the seven per cent allowed in New York, under a holding that the place of performance will determine the rate of interest. The rule continues to bedevil foreign creditors to the present day.[92]

Conditions in Canton grew more bleak. Five years after Consequa and four other junior merchants had submitted their affairs to trustee control, the trustees concluded that conditions had not improved sufficiently.

> The considerate and judicious support, which the Hongs so unhappily circumstanced have received from the Hon'ble Company may be considered to have re-established them; but instead of having employed their restored credit wisely and correctly, we apprehend they have, in this season especially, perverted it to their own Detriment and that of their Creditors.

The British East India Company at the same time resolved to restrict advances to the junior hong merchants to amounts necessary for current affairs only.[93] In March 1818 Consequa's debt to the Company stood at 321,516 taels ($446,264.20).[94] That season the Company decided to end its practice of nearly a decade of advancing money to the hong merchants for purchases of tea for the coming season. A number of reasons were advanced for this change, including the problem that advances to the tea districts had driven prices up while discouraging attention to quality, and the difficulty of policing this great investment. A "very strong case of necessity" was made out by the British East India Company, echoing Consequa's problems in the United States, that "it would be impolitic to hazard the Company's Property in a Country where our footing is at all times precarious and where there is no mode of counteracting or of punishing the misconduct of the Merchants on whose behalf the advances may be made, but such as involves the subversion of the system we are desirous to uphold."[95]

Consequa continued to trade and had some success in controlling his debt to the East India Company. In March, 1819 he owed 201,851 taels ($280,169.18), which crept up to 257,299 taels ($357,131.01) the following July.[96] At this moment the depression of 1819 hit the China trade, driving the American trade totals for 1820 to half the amounts attained the preceding year.[97] Samuel Russell, founder of Russell & Company, one of the preeminent American firms of the China coast, wrote Edward Carrington in Providence in June, 1820 that Consequa had been "very anxious to make a contract with us," but that his lowest prices for teas could not compare with those offered by the outside merchant Paunqua, from whom Russell made a $25,000 purchase.[98] The following year Russell described the season of 1820 as "by no means a lucrative one to the Hong Merchants generally, but on the contrary a very losing business, owing to the unusually heavy importations of foreign produce & manufactures, which have generally declined in value, on the hands of the Hong Merchants."[99]

89. *Consequa v. Fanning*, 3 Johns. Ch. 587, 603, 605, (N.Y. 1818).

90. George T. Staunton, *Ta Tsing Leu Lee* (1810; rpt. Taipei: Ch'eng-wen, 1966). This may be the first citation of Chinese law in a western judicial opinion.

91. *Consequa v. Fanning*, 3 Johns ch. 587, 607 (N.Y. 1818).

92. *Fanning v. Consequa*, 17 Johns. 511, 523 (N.Y. Court of Errors 1820); *Baring v. Fanning*, 2 F. Cas. 791 (C.C.D.N.Y. 1826) (No. 982); *Banco Nacional de Cuba v. Chase Manhattan Bank*, 505 F. Supp. 412, 448 (S.D.N.Y. 1980) (citing *Fanning v. Consequa*).

93. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, pp. 311-312.

94. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 330.

95. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, pp. 332-333.

96. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, pp. 346, 353.

97. Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, Prior to 1820," *Pacific Historical Review* 9 (1940), pp. 425, 443.

98. Letter, Samuel Russell (Canton) to Edward Carrington, 9 June 1820, Letterbook 1, Container 15, Russell & Company Papers (Samuel Russell Papers), Library of Congress.

99. Letter, Samuel Russell (Canton) to Edward Carrington, 13 November 1821, Letterbook 1, Container 15, Russell & Company Papers (Samuel Russell Papers), Library of Congress.

The years 1820 and 1821 were also bad in the American courts. A new suit was filed in federal court in Philadelphia in the April 1820 term, against Roger Smith on his $2,766.15 note made in 1806. This was another fruitless effort. The note had been endorsed in January 1809 to John Jacob Astor, who had given it in turn to Benjamin Chew Wilcocks for collection. Smith had made one $600 payment. The confession of judgment provided by the incarcerated debtor to Consequa at the time the action was filed, reciting lack of means to satisfy the debt, proved of little utility in recovering the $6,353.15 admitted due.[100] A second action was filed in the October, 1821 term, on Henry B. Stewart's $4,900 note made in 1817, seeking $10,000 in damages. Stewart's confession of judgment was entered on 27 May 1822, "being assured that no harsh measures will for the present be taken against me."[101]

In 1822 Consequa's answer to William Read's countersuit, "sworn to by the defendant at Canton, in April last," reached Philadelphia. Consequa had initially brought an action against Read in 1816 on over $35,000 in notes made in the years 1805 and 1806,[102] which Read met with a bill in equity for an injunction to stay the proceedings. The injunction was finally granted in 1821, because no answer had been received from Canton, and receipt of the answer in 1822 promised to reopen the proceedings. Consequa's answer came before the Court in support of a motion to dissolve the injunction. Consequa's answer was objected to as insufficient, and Circuit Justice Washburn agreed. "This is not sufficient. According to the practice of the English courts of chancery . . . the answer ought to have been taken and sworn to under a dedimus potestatem."[103] The motion to dissolve the injunction was accordingly overruled, with the "order that a dedimus issue to a commissioner at Canton, in conformity with the ninth rule of the court, as now existing, directing the oath to be administered in the most solemn form observed by the laws and usages of China."[104]

The Li-ch'uan hong failed in 1821. In March Consequa's debt to the East India Company stood at 417,649 taels ($579,696.81), and credit transactions he had entered into in the season went poorly. In September his total liabilities stood at 400,000 taels ($555,200), and Consequa was unable to meet his commitments.[105] Samuel Russell reported the suspension of Consequa's business in a letter in November, 1821.[106] The business of the embarrassed hong was assumed by the other nine hong merchants, who delivered a bond undertaking to pay the debt in five annual installments.[107] Consequa was left in day-to-day charge of the business.

Consequa again found himself in serious straits in 1823. On 29 April 1823 he appealed to the British East India Company for a loan of 18,800 taels ($26,094.40), and he repeated the request on 23 May 1823. The Company refused both requests, and "resolved to convey to him their continued determination to abstain from affording him any relief for the difficulties his conduct has exposed him to." No further appeal was received and on 5 August 1823 the broken hong merchant died, leaving an insolvent business that required further assumption of debt by the other hong merchants.[108] Consequa's debt to the East India Company was thereafter paid off in regular installments, making its last appearance in the annual accounts of the Company in 1826.[109]

Conclusion: The Dangers of Foreign Trade

Surviving records establish that the Li-ch'uan hong was an important member of the thirteen hongs of Canton. One distinction in its activities was the significant volume of trade that it conducted on a credit basis, an accommodation that Consequa made for foreign merchants long before he assumed hong status. Consequa enjoyed great business success, grew rich, and traded on a large scale with the British East India Company, the French, and the Americans.

100. Consequa v. Roger Smith, April term 1820, No. 6, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

101. Consequa v. Henry B. Stewart, October term 1821, No. 44, Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

102. See Appendix.

103. A dedimus potestatem is a "writ or commission issuing out of chancery, empowering the persons named therein to perform certain acts, as to administer oaths to defendants in chancery and take their answers, to administer oaths of office to justices of the peace, etc." Henry C. Black, *Black's Law Dictionary* (4th ed. St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1968), p. 501.

104. *Read v. Consequa*, 20 F. Cas. 353 (C.C.D. Pa. 1822) (No. 11, 607).

105. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, pp. 1, 8.

106. Letter, Samuel Russell (Canton) to Edward Carrington, 13 November 1821, Letterbook 1, Container 15, Russell & Company Papers (Samuel Russell Papers), Library of Congress.

107. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, p. 8.

108. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, p. 73.

109. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, pp. 70, 87, 102, 122.

Precisely how Consequa grew wealthy is unclear. He may simply have bought low and sold high. Perhaps he just did well, by taking and actually collecting a normal profit in extraordinary times. Possibly Consequa took a thin profit on a high volume of trade, and relied on additional income from interest to make him wealthy. Also unclear is the amount of capital of the Li-ch'uan hong, but it probably did not much exceed the approximately $500,000 attached by its debtors in Philadelphia in April, 1808. This fund was reduced not only by the attachment, which prevented Consequa's agents from collecting debts for the duration, but also by the American Embargo of 1807-1809, which ruined many of the firms and individuals that owed Consequa money.

Before the attachment, Consequa had instructed his American agents to collect his debts, and to take necessary steps to that end. The threat was then made to enforce these obligations in court, a step common in the United States but scorned as a means of debt collection in China. Collection efforts provoked countersuit and attachment, and gave rise to extended litigation in the United States courts. In the "tedious litigation" (his term) in which Consequa thus found himself ensnared, he fell victim to formalistic and tactical errors, and to a legal system ill-adapted to effective resolution of disputes arising in international trade. Neither exceptionally skilled American legal counsel nor appeal to President Madison helped him. Consequa's inability to recover much of the money he lent to Americans in the first decade of the nineteenth century led directly to the weakening and collapse of his Li-ch'uan hong through 1813, 1821 and 1823.

The Li-ch'uan hong failed because it risked much or all of its capital in loans to private Western traders in an era when there was little protection for such extensions of credit. The limited protections offered to merchants by the Chinese legal system did not extend to problems of Chinese merchants engaged in foreign trade. The American courts, in contrast, did not hesitate to hear complaints brought by and against the hong merchants of Canton, China. In one action brought by Consequa in New York, Chancellor Kent noticed charges made by the defendants "against the tyranny and oppression of *Consequa,* and the other *Hong* merchants, at *Canton,*" but stated his belief that the plaintiff was a man "more sinned against than sinning." The court had to give him a fair hearing.

> When such a man, from such a people, comes as a suitor into our courts, he ought not to be heard with a mist of prejudice hanging over his name, his character, and his country. His claims should be received with candour, and treated with impartiality. It is no more than common justice; but the sense of our responsibility cannot fail to be more lively, when we reflect that the people to whom he appeals, are in possession of gifts denied to the *Chinese;* I mean the blessings of freedom, and the light of science, and the still brighter light of the christian revelation.[110]

As impartially as the American courts might have attempted to hear actions brought by and against Chinese merchants, the interests of Chinese litigants suffered from court delays, from delays for communication over long distances by sea, and from unfamiliarity with the American legal system. The record of the Li-ch'uan hong demonstrates how trade disruptions, distance, and the unfamiliar practices of American courts in the early nineteenth century placed the Chinese merchant litigant at a ruinous disadvantage.

110. *Consequa v. Fanning,* 3 Johns. Ch. 587, 606-607 (N.Y. 1818).

APPENDIX

An Incomplete Tabulation Of Consequa's Loans To Americans And Debt To The British East India Company

	Notes Made and Consignment Shipments	*Payments Received on Notes Otherwise Not Known*	*East India Company Debt as of the March Opening of Books*
1793	$ 43,821.00[1]		
1794			
1795			
1796			
1797			
1798	3,410.50[2]		
1799			
1800	33,142.33[3]		
1801	30,827.50[4]		
1802			
1803	20,000.00[5]		
1804	12,189.00[6]		
1805	43,680.89[7]	$ 5,420.18[8]	
1806	138,976.56[9]	39,206.00[10]	
1807	50,724.63[11]		
1808	1,365.00[12]		
1809	89,690.63[13]		931,027.37 (Tls. 670,769)[14]
1810	71,198.86[15]	8,688.00[16]	847,548.88 (Tls. 610,626)[17]
1811	35,711.50[18]		
1812			822,906.00 [19]
1813			
1814			
1815			317,720.14 (Tls. 228,905)[20]
1816			
1817	4,900.00[21]		333,126.00 [22]
1818			446,264.20 (Tls. 321,516)[23]
1819			280,169.18 (Tls. 201,851)[24]
1820			
1821			579,696.81 (Tls. 417,649)[25]
1822			376,685.15 (Tls. 271,387)[26]
1823	"Estate of Conseequa"		342,630.57 (Tls. 246,852)[27]
1824	"Estate of Conseequa"		256,972.93 (Tls. 185,139)[28]
1825	"Estate of Conseequa"		171,315.28 (Tls. 123,426)[29]
1826	"Account of Conseequa"		85,657.64 (Tls. 61,713)[30]

NOTES TO APPENDIX

1. Letter, John Howel (Canton) to Joseph Barrell and others, 11 May 1795 (stating that there has been a $43,821 default in the payment of Captain Joseph Ingraham's debt to Consequa, without identifying either the date or amount of the original obligation), reprinted in Frederic W. Howay, ed., *Voyages of the "Columbia" to the Northwest Coast*, Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, p. 79 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1941), pp. 489, 490; Seaburg and Paterson, *Merchant*, p. 101 (Ingraham reached Macao at the beginning of 1793).

2. Consequa v. George Howell, October term 1810, No. 52 (promissory note in the amount of $3,410.50 dated 26 November 1798), Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

3. Consequa v. Hilary Baker, April term 1805, No. 47 (promissory note in the amount of $1,130.50 dated 11 December 1800); Consequa v. Thomas Wiles, October term 1805, No. 60 (promissory note in the amount of $2,574.15 dated 8 November 1800); Consequa *et al.* v. Benjamin Wilcocks *et al.*, October term 1809, No. 38 (promissory note in the amount of $29,437.58 dated 12 December 1800), Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

4. Consequa v. Anthony Morris *et al.*, April term 1804, No. 37 (promissory note in the amount of $25,000.00 dated 28 November 1801); Consequa v. Edward Yard, April term 1805, No. 46 (promissory note in the amount of $2,200.00 dated 30 January 1801); Consequa v. Francis Pasquier, October term 1810, No. 10 (promissory note in the amount of $3,627.50 dated 8 August 1801), Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

5. Consequa v. Ralph Peters, October term 1809, No. 71 (promissory note in the amount of $20,000.00 dated 4 November 1803), Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

6. Consequa v. Robert Bridges, October term 1810, No. 33 (promissory note in the amount of $10,000.00 dated 13 December 1804), Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania; Edward Carrington's Consular Letter Book, Edward Carrington Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island (record of Ephraim Prescott's promissory note in the amount of $1,819.00 dated 6 October 1804); Consequa's signed receipt, dated Canton, 7 May 1809 and executed in duplicate, for $370.00 payment by Munro, Snow & Munro on their otherwise unidentified promissory note of March, 1804, Edward Carrington Papers, Box 211, folder 1809, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island. *See* Downs, "A Study," pp. 1, 5.

7. Consequa v. William Read, October term 1816, No. 15 (six promissory notes dated 12 December 1805 in the respective amounts of $5,612.86, $8,442.30, $1,553.69, $1,593.81, $1,593.80, and $8,442.31); Willings & Francis v. Consequa, October term 1810, No. 28 (Statement of Jury Award indicating $16,442.12 "Amot. of Note date 16 Nov. 1805 & Int. due thereon."), Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

8. Consequa's Account Current with George Emlen (indicating five payments in 1805, totalling $5,420.18), Gratz Collection, Box 44, Case 14, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

9. Consequa v. John Meany, October term 1809, No. 11 (promissory note in the amount of $20,021.60 dated 18 November 1806); Consequa v. William Read, October term 1816, No. 15 (promissory note in the amount of $3,922.79 dated 2 December 1806, promissory note in the amount of $3,565.21 dated 15 December 1806, and promissory note in the amount of $400.00 dated 16 December 1806); Consequa v. Roger Smith, April term 1820, No. 6 (promissory note in the amount of $2,766.15 dated 5 February 1806); Willings & Francis v. Consequa, October term 1810, No. 28 (Statement of Jury Award indicating $44,220.00 "Amot. of Note date Decem. 1, 1806 & Int. due thereon."); Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania; *Willings v. Consequa*, 30 F. Cas. 55, 59 (C.C.D. Pa. 1816) (No. 17, 767) ($60,000 credit on cargo for ship *Asia*); *Consequa v. Fanning*, 3 Johns. Ch. 587, 589 (N.Y. 1818) (promissory note in the amount of $4,080.81 dated 6 February 1806).

10. Consequa's Account Current with George Emlen (indicating four payments in 1806, totalling $39,206.00), Gratz Collection, Box 44, Case 14, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

11. Consequa v. John Ansley, October term 1811, No. 39 (promissory note in the amount of $1,752.00 dated 24 November 1807), Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania; *Consequa v. Fanning*, 3 Johns. Ch. 587, 587-588 (N.Y. 1818) (consignments in the amount of $19,837.00 on 22 December 1807 and $29,135.63 on 24 December 1807).

12. "Captain Nathaniel Pearson in Account Current with Edward Carrington," dated 22 January 1811, Edward Carrington Papers, Box 211, folder 1811, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence.

13. Consequa v. Caleb Ash, October term 1809, No. 26 (consignment in the amount of $50,000.00 on 1 May 1809), Consequa v. Henry Toland, Jr., October term 1809, No. 27 (same), Consequa v. Ash & Toland, October term 1809, No. 28 (same), Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania; *Consequa v. Fanning*, 3 Johns. Ch. 587, 588 (N.Y. 1818) (promissory note in the amount of $39,690.63 dated in December 1809).

14. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 100.

15. *Consequa v. Fanning*, 3 Johns. Ch. 587, 588 (N.Y. 1818) (consignments in the amount of $64,828.65 on November 25, 1810 and $6,370.21 on 29 November 1810).

16. Letter, Caleb Brintnall (New York) to Edward Carrington, 20 February 1810 (transmitting $8,688.00 principal and interest due to Consequa). Edward Carrington Papers, Box 13, folder 1810-1811, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence.

17. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 130.

18. *Consequa v. Fanning*, 3 Johns. Ch. 587, 588, 590, 593, 608 (N.Y. 1818) (promissory note in the amount of $35,711.50 dated 19 January 1811).

19. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 247.

20. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 234.

21. Consequa v. Henry B. Stewart, October term 1821, No. 44 (promissory note in the amount of $4,900.00 dated 13 January 1817), Records of the Circuit Court for the District of Pennsylvania.

22. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 247.

23. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 330.

24. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. III, p. 346.

25. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, p. 1.

26. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, p. 52.

27. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, p. 70.

28. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, p. 87.

29. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, p. 102.

30. Morse, *Chronicles*, Vol. IV, p. 122.

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The Antebellum Canton Tea Trade: Recent Perspectives

ROBERT GARDELLA

PRE-OPIUM War Sino-Western trade at Canton has more frequently been discussed as a conflict-ridden prelude to the forced reorientation of Qing (Ch'ing) China's relations with the West than as a pragmatic, mutually profitable system of economic relationships in its own right.[1] Much attention has consequently been devoted to such issues as the constraints imposed upon Western commerce from 1757 to 1842 as institutionalized in the well-known "Canton system", and the unsavory role of drug trafficking in precipitating a crisis in Sino-Western relations. This essay has nothing new to relate regarding either of these themes. Based on a perusal of recent Western and Chinese scholarship as well as some contemporary evidence relating to the export tea trade, this paper aims merely to highlight certain institutional arrangements that *facilitated* the conduct of the antebellum Canton trade on the supply side.

The Canton tea trade, the largest and most valuable component of mid-Qing international commerce, exemplifies the special case of premodern China as a significant factor in world commodities markets. Before the mid-nineteenth century, China monopolized the supply of tea available to the West. Robert Constant, a French merchant active at Canton in the mid-1700s, remarked that "it is tea which draws European vessels to China; the other articles that comprise their cargoes are only taken for the sake of variety."[2] Constant was guilty of only mild exaggeration. Between 1719 and 1833 tea comprised seventy to ninety per cent of cargoes outbound from Canton.[3] Seventy per cent of the Dutch East India Company's total purchases from 1729 to 1793 consisted of tea shipments.[4] Over the period 1792 to 1828 a quarter of the net profits of the English East India Company, probably the largest single commercial organization in the world at that time, stemmed from the Canton tea trade alone.[5] At this juncture in global commercial history, tea played a role roughly analogous to that which strategic commodities such as rubber and palm oil were to assume by the late nineteenth century.[6]

I. Substantivist, Formalist, and Marxist Views of the Qing Economy and the Canton Trade

Three modes of understanding the mid-Qing economy and the Canton trade of which it was a part can be discerned in recent scholarly literature. The first of these, the "substantivist" perspective, was first propounded by the late economist Karl Polanyi, and has been most consistently applied to China by the historian Mark Mancall. Denominated as the "formalist" approach on the basis of its affinity with classical economic theory, the second viewpoint may be identified

1. See, for example, Frederick Wakeman, "The Canton Trade and the Opium War" in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 10 Late Ch'ing, 1800-1900, Part I* (Cambridge Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 163-212. A stimulating and very useful corrective account is Randle Edwards' "The Old Canton System of Foreign Trade" in Victor H. Li, ed., *Law and Politics in China's Foreign Trade* (Seattle Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1977), pp. 360-378.

2. Quoted in Louis Dermigny, *La Chine et l'Occident, le Commerce à Canton au XVIIIe siècle: 1719-1833*, Vol. 2 (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1964), p. 545.

3. Dermigny, p. 519.

4. See C. J. A. Jörg, *Porcelain and the Dutch China Trade* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), pp. 77 and Appendix 8, pp. 217-220.

5. Hoh-cheung and Lorna H. Mui, *The Management of Monopoly: a Study of the East India Company's Conduct of its Tea Trade, 1784-1833* (Vancouver Wash.: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), p. 78. In view of the Muis findings, Wakeman's assertion in "The Canton Trade", pp. 166-167, that "the East India Company made very little money from the trade itself . . . The E.I.C. earnings were simply not that great" cannot be taken very seriously.

6. See Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 244 and Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 325-332.

with the work of a number of economic historians, including Ramon Myers and K.N. Chaudhuri. Lastly, the research of most contemporary historians in the People's Republic of China evaluates their country's past within a Sinified Marxist framework, manifested in the present case by efforts to detect "proto-capitalist" features in late imperial China's economy and society.

The debates between substantivists and formalists have engendered an extensive but not particularly enlightening literature. In setting forth diametrically opposite images of intercultural trade, the protagonists have often talked past one another.[7] Polanyi and his followers maintain that market forces had very limited scope in pre-nineteenth century commerce. Exchange relationships in societies as far removed in space and time as those of ancient Mesopotamia, classical Greece and Rome, pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, and seventeenth and eighteenth century West Africa were characteristically embedded in non-economic institutions. Reciprocity and redistribution by social or political agencies predominated, not fluctuations of supply and demand as mediated through price-making markets. The formalist response to this line of argument is self-evident: an affirmation that classical economic theory not only elucidates pre-modern exchange relationships, but that market exchanges *were* the normative form of such transactions prior to the Industrial Revolution.[8]

As might be expected, these generalities translate into highly divergent conceptions of the mid-Qing economy and of antebellum Canton trade. Mark Mancall, for instance, views the economy of the "sinocentric empire" as redistributive in nature—both domestic and foreign trade were controlled by an imperial Confucian bureaucracy which consistently rigged prices. In a culture in which merchants were both deprecated and restricted, and local markets catered chiefly to subsistence-oriented peasants, there was little scope for the emergence of capitalism. Consequently, only a "primitive supply-demand-price mechanism" existed.[9] Like all preindustrial societies, China lacked certain prerequisites for true market competition, including standardized goods, quality control of production, and an efficient, unified system of transportation. Lastly, China's limited foreign trade was carefully administered at so-called "ports of trade" such as Canton and Kyakhta, where "price risk was excluded, and profit depended on turnover rather than on price differentials."[10]

In contrast, Ramon Myers characterizes the mid-Ming to mid-Qing economy in terms of a number of organizational factors which contributed to growth in the rural economy and the emergence of large-scale domestic trade. Much of this growth was attributable to the dynamic development of the private sector. Especially noteworthy was the emergence of what Myers terms a "triadic complex", a ubiquitious network of merchants, middlemen, and commercial agents who employed a large full- and part-time labor force for production and distribution. This distinctively Chinese system of economic organization relied upon highly flexible, decentralized networks of ownership and management linked by a wide variety of contractual procedures and financing arrangements. Contractual agreements regarding property rights were articulated by an emerging body of customary law. The imperial government had extremely limited economic functions. These responsibilities were by the mid-Qing largely limited to policing and a minimal amount of licensing private-sector transactions. Myers affirms the existence of an essentially open market system which fostered an enormous volume of exchange, and an increasing degree of specialization among innumerable dispersed petty units of production (i.e. farms, handicraft workshops, and commercial firms).[11]

Speaking more directly to the nature of China's overseas trade, the economic historian K. N. Chaudhuri sees Canton (as well as other great Asian emporia) as on the whole facilitating rather than hindering wholesale trade. At Canton, as well as at major ports along the Indian and Red Sea coasts, there were four major services commonly available to traders by the early eighteenth century: "spot" or forward wholesale markets with clear price indicators and continuity of supply, monetary institutions providing credit and exchange services, a market for shipping space, and either binding mercan-

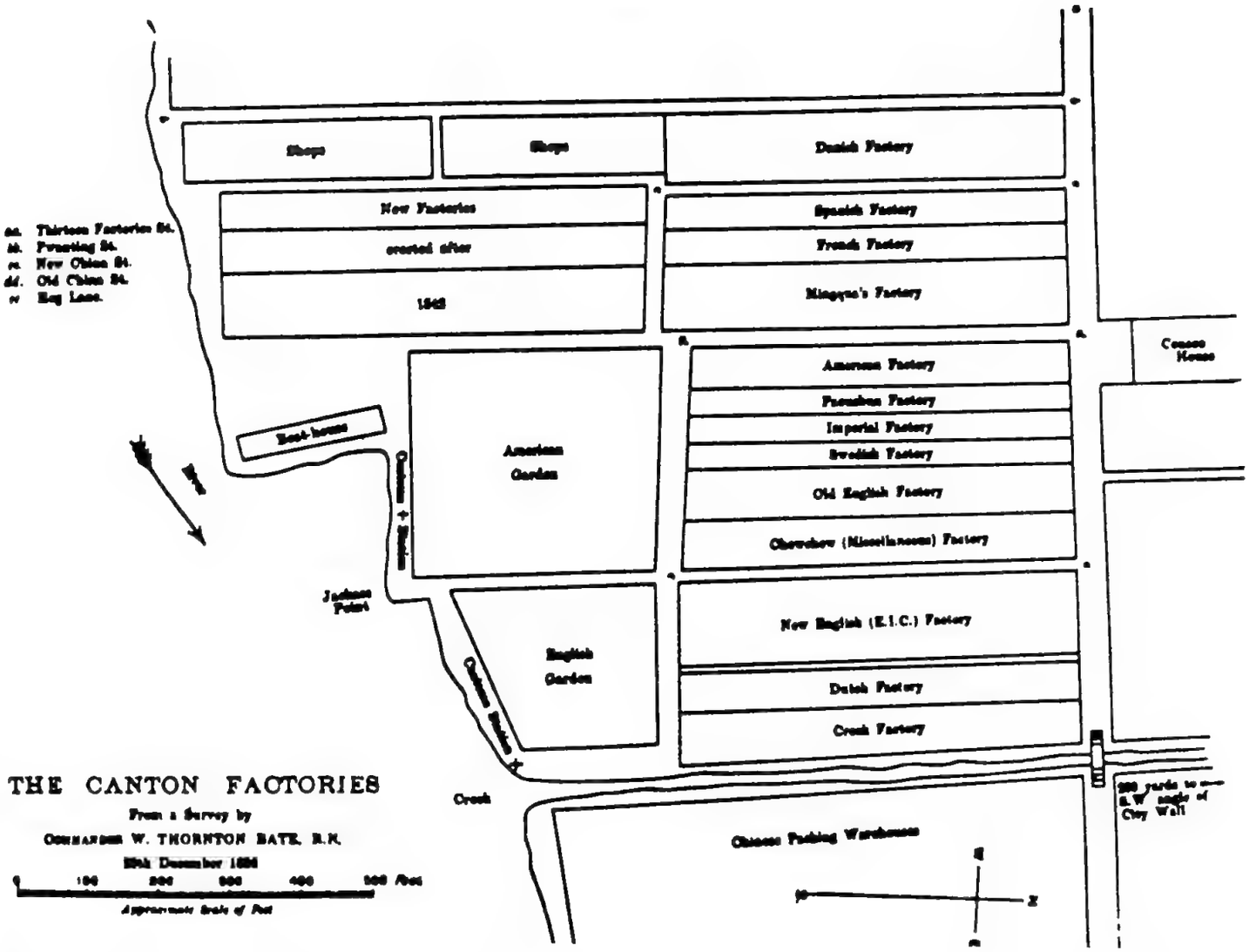
7. See Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 14.

8. See Curtin, p. 14 and Karl Polanyi, *The Livelihood of Man*, edited by Harry W. Pearson (New York: Academic Press, 1977).

9. Mark Mancall, *China at the Center: 300 Years of Foreign Policy* (New York N.Y.: The Free Press, 1984), pp. 45-51.

10. Mancall, pp. 51, 53, 56-59 (the quoted passage is from p. 59).

11. Ramon H. Myers, "Some Issues on Economic Organization during the Ming and Ch'ing Period: A Review Article", *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 3:2 (December/1974), pp. 77-97; see also Fumei Chang Chen and Ramon Myers, "Customary Law and the Economic Growth of China during the Ch'ing Period: Part I", *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 3:5 (November, 1976), pp. 1-32.



tile consensus or law courts to settle accounts and clear commercial debts.[12] Chaudhuri goes on to affirm that "inter-regional or long-distance trade cannot by definition function without capital, money, and prices. The time interval between the initial investment made by merchants in purchasing export goods, their dispatch and sale in distant markets, and the final returns gives rise to actual operations as well as conceptual measurements that are entirely capitalistic."[13]

The organization of the Canton tea trade in particular, being based on a system of advance financing, was "the nearest to the centralized market structure of Europe which the [European East India] companies experienced at the Asian supply end."[14]

Under the rubric of investigating manifestations of "incipient capitalism" or "the sprouts of capitalism" in the sixteenth to early nineteenth century Chinese economy, historians in the People's Republic of China over the past decade have generated (or rather re-generated, since studies of this topic flourished up to the early sixties) an impressive body of scholarship.[15] They

12. K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 197 ff.

13. Chaudhuri, p. 203.

14. K. N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760* (Cambridge Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 135.

15. An outstanding example of this voluminous literature is Li Wenzhi, Wei Jinyu, and Jing Junjian, *Ming-Qing shidai de nongye*

maintain that various dynamic changes were under way in the agricultural sector, in the relationship between public and private sectors of the economy, and in various handicraft industries. In brief, these phenomena might be summarized as follows:

1. increasing commercialization, monetization, and the growth of internal markets;

2. growing differentiation of the peasantry, resulting in the emergence of a stratum of "managerial landlords" oriented towards cash cropping and a large underclass of hired farm laborers;

3. the development of wage labor relations of production in handicraft industries;

4. a more positive role for the Qing state in stimulating the development of a market economy, fostering growth in productivity, and removing legal barriers to socio-economic equality.[16]

Although these tendencies are generally regarded as "progressive", their interpretation continues to pose problems for Chinese Marxist historians, who are by no means of one mind regarding their significance.[17] Yet even if such changes were in some fashion aborted by the entrenched socio-political power of "feudal" landlordism, as many Chinese scholars continue to insist, the aborted changes hardly imply that stagnation prevailed in the pre-Opium War Chinese economy. Non-Chinese scholars have in fact recently corroborated the presence of several of the above phenomena prior to the intrusion of extensive Western influence. William Rowe's landmark study of Hankou (Hankow) from 1796 to 1889, for example, points up the existence of thriving pan-national commodity trading, growing socio-economic differentiation, rational "capitalistic" forms of business management, and official promotion of commerce (accompanied by increasing fiscal dependence on it as a source of revenue) within the confines of an inland urban milieu.[18]

Preoccupied as they have been with tracing indigenous sources of socio-economic transformation, China's historians have as yet failed to give exogenous factors such as international trade their due.[19] The impact of foreign commerce on central and southern China has merited some scholarly attention, however, as will be apparent in the following pages.

II. Some Observations on the Canton Tea Trade

It is the burden of the remainder of this paper that contemporary evidence as well as recent historical research on the conduct of the Canton tea trade ill accord with substantivist analysis. The formalist and Marxist alternatives presented above are not only more convincing interpretations, but in fact serve to reinforce one another.

To begin with, the mechanisms which K. N. Chaudhuri sees as essential to facilitate foreign trade certainly existed at Canton, although their efficiency increasingly came into question by the eve of the Opium War. Regarding the supply side of the export tea trade, Hoh-cheung and Lorna Mui's latest study concludes with the affirmation that "to supply foreign merchants adequately, the Chinese undertook all the work of canvassing the country for the desired goods, of manufacturing some goods according to specification, of packaging the goods to suit the exporters' needs, of ensuring a sufficiency as in quantity and quality, and above all, of transporting all articles to one city for sale and export. Indeed, where else on earth would foreign merchants be provided with similar services and commercial convenience?"[20]

As the Muis' painstaking archival research reveals, the East India Company's commercial bureaucracy also acted with remarkable skill and at relatively moderate overhead cost to convey market information between Canton and London between 1784 and 1833. Although tea as an agricultural product was not a standardized commodity in the same sense as were silk goods and porcelain, Chinese suppliers were certainly able to

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zibenzhuyi wenti (The Problem of the Sprouts of Capitalism in Agriculture during the Ming-Qing Period) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1983).

16. See Wang Yeh-chien, "The Sprouts of Capitalism in China" in Frederic Wakeman, Jr., ed., *Ming and Qing Historical Studies in the People's Republic of China* (Berkeley, Calif.: Center for Chinese Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1980), pp. 96-103, and Wang Yeh-chien, "Notes on the Sprouts of Capitalism" in Albert Feuerwerker, ed., *Chinese Social and Economic History from the Song to 1900* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1982), pp. 51-57.

17. See Arif Dirlik, "Chinese Historians and the Marxist Concept of Capitalism: A Critical Examination", *Modern China*, 8:1 (January 1982), pp. 105-132.

18. William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796-1889* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1984), pp. 52-76, 341 ff.

19. See Dirlik, "Chinese Historians", pp. 128-129; Wang, "Sprouts of Capitalism", pp. 102-103 and Wang, "Notes on the Sprouts", p. 53.

20. H. C. and L. Mui, *Management of Monopoly*, p. 130.

adjust to shifts in foreign demand (such as from cheaper Bohea tea to finer, more costly congou black tea) as mediated through the Company's Canton staff.[21] Quality control of tea exports was often an issue, given the decentralized and fragmented mode of Chinese tea production and the problems of packaging and storing for oceanic voyagers lasting half a year. But careful inspection of purchases by professional tea buyers, coupled with financial penalties for fraud imposed on both English supercargoes and Chinese tea merchants, reduced the difficulty to manageable proportions.[22]

There can be little doubt that the Canton tea market was a price-making market rather than an administered marketplace. A 1798 account taken from the papers of Constable Pierrepont, a New York merchant who traded at Canton in 1796, makes the case succinctly:

> The standard price of teas is settled by the Hong Merchants and Supercargoes of the English Factory about the beginning or middle of November in every season; these are called the 'Companys prices' for the season and the Hong Merchants consider themselves obliged to adhere to them tho' they will deviate from them, as their interests may dictate—the 'outside' tea dealers will sell 15 or 25 percent less for dollars when they are hard pressed for money.[23]

Pierrepont goes on to note that the Hang (Hong) merchants as a quid pro quo for "securing" or guaranteeing each ship, together with its cargo and crew, and paying taxes and bribes, generally required foreign supercargoes to contract for $30,000-$50,000 worth of teas at a set price including a 10-15% mark-up. After fulfilling this commitment, buyers could trade freely with any sellers they chose, including the numerous non-security or "outside" dealers mentioned above.[24] There is no indication in this contemporary source, therefore, to support the contention that Qing imperial officials "regulated" tea export prices at Canton.

Bereft of the impersonal body of civil laws and a court system which some Western economic historians declare as essential to enforce compliance in complex exchange transactions, the Canton marketplace relied upon a combination of mechanisms to achieve the same results.[25] Relationships of mutual trust and joint interest in commercial success between Chinese and Westerners constituted one commonly reported (and logically necessary) element in doing business at Canton. Frederic Delano Grant's findings, some of which are published for the first time in this issue of *The American Neptune*, demonstrate that it was also possible to adjudicate commercial disputes between Chinese and foreign merchants in foreign (in this case, American) courts. The Qing government's somewhat grudging commitment to underwrite foreign debts incurred by insolvent Hang merchants was the ultimate recourse for their creditors, although such matters were usually settled without resorting to direct official involvement.[26]

Contract I (March-April 1827/Daoguang 7/3)

The firm of Yi Zhumao, the tea contractor, today receives a contract with the Fulong Bao Hang for the six "chops" of Zhenglong, Zhulong, Fuhua, Fulan, Fuzhen and Fuxing of large chests of Wuyi congou tea. Each chop is to consist of 620 chests, and each chest is to have an approximate weight of sixty-three jin, to be sold to the foreign firm according to the stipulated net weight at the price in silver per hundred jin. If the foreign price is calculated as 25 taels (Chinese silver weights), the contract calls for a standard value of 17 taels, 3 cash. If it is 26 taels, the standard value will be 18 taels, 3 cash; if it is 28 taels, the standard value will be 21 taels, 3 cash; if 29 taels, the standard value will be 22 taels, 3 cash; if 30 taels, the standard value will be 23 taels, 3 cash. If this is pure silver, however, there will be no deductions, and no additional fee will be charged for packing in tin-lined chests. Storage will also be included at no additional charge.

It is clearly understood that each of the six "chops" above will first be valued at 3,000 taels, thus the grand total for the six will be 18,000 taels. Additional money will be paid as authorized by the Guangli Hang when the foreign price has been paid in full, as clearly agreed upon. In addition, in calculating the original capital (except for that agreed upon in the contract), the Fulong firm will pay to this firm [i.e. Yi Zhumao] the sum of 1% interest per tael per month if there is an insufficiency. At

21. Mui, pp. 90-126.

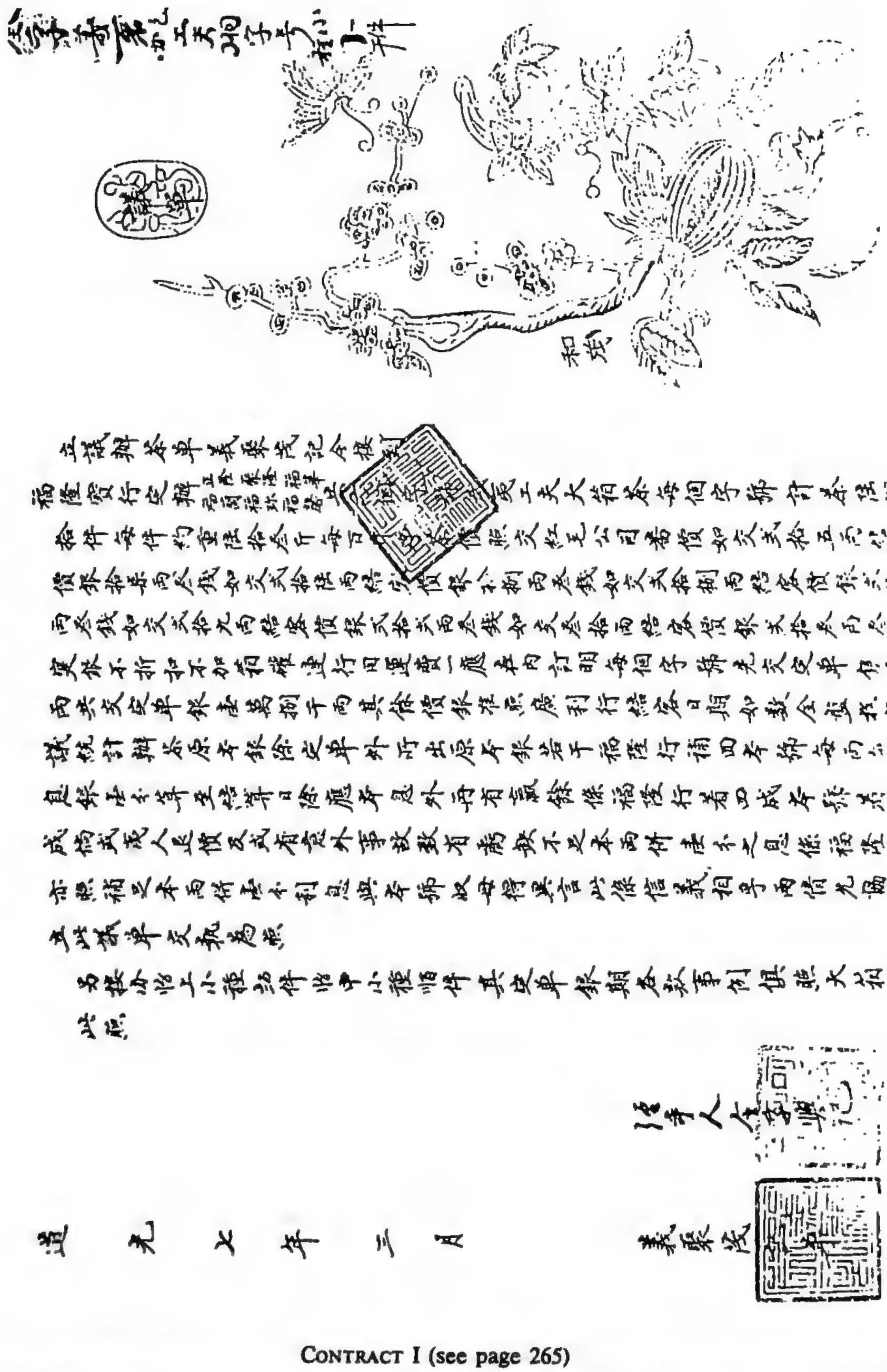
22. Mui, pp. 40-42.

23. "Notes on the Trade of China taken chiefly from Observations made at Canton in the Season of 1796 and corrected in London June 1798", p. 5, Constable-Pierrepont Papers, vol. 74, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. The writer is grateful to Professor Murray Rubenstein of Baruch College, C.U.N.Y. for bringing this source to his attention.

24. "Notes on the Trade," pp. 25-26.

25. See Douglass C. North, "Government and the Cost of Exchange in History", *Journal of Economic History*, 44:2 (June 1984), pp. 255-264.

26. Edwards, "Old Canton System", pp. 372-375.



CONTRACT I (see page 265)

Early nineteenth-century Chinese contract for the sale of Minbei tea to Canton. (Reproduced with permission of Jardine Matheson Archive, Cambridge University Library, U.K.)

立議单人张爷號今在廣面接到
福隆寶行定武買大紅福昌字號工夫茶
伯仟茶價銀照天紅原司番價如天
六兩結客價銀按錢如天八兩結客價銀
不扣不加箱罐裝用一律在內客自運至粤省天即付定单
兩其除茶銀照 寶行閩發承办之茶務要株選工等貨色
条係同結官雅均勻其茶壯十八月到揀九司中到半十月中到有不得遲
如過期不到及貨色低潮即將此茶退還原客另貨以過之单銀两
立五息送還寶行倘或此来少行亦不得推卸此係信義相交立
議单交 寶行收執為憑

經手人 [illegible]

道光柒年叁月吉日立議单人張亞茂爺

CONTRACT II (see page 268)

Early nineteenth-century Chinese contract for the sale of Minbei tea to Canton. (Reproduced with permission of Jardine Matheson Archive, Cambridge University Library, U.K.)

the time of calculation, in addition to the interest payment, any surplus funds will be divided as follows: 40 percent to the Fulong Hang and 60 percent to the Yi Zhumao Hang. If the foreigners refuse to buy at the anticipated price, and other such unfavorable circumstances occur which result in a deficiency in the proceeds obtained, then the Fulong Hang will completely pay the proceeds plus interest to this firm at the rate of 1% per tael. This contract does not allow for any other interpretation, but is a matter involving mutual trust. This contract is given as proof of the intentions of both parties.

In addition, it is agreed that 800 "twenty-five" chests of top quality xiaozhong tea and 300 "twenty-five" chests of medium quality xiaozhong tea will be provided under the same terms as the aforementioned large chests.

The Manager of Quan Zixing Firm (seal)
The Contractor of the Yi Zhumao Firm (seal)

CONTRACT II (27 MARCH/1827/DAOGUANG 7/3/1)

The contractor, the Zhang Cangji Hao, today in Canton personally contracts with the Fulong Bao Hang that six hundred large chests of Wuyi congou tea of the "chop" of Fuchang, each of an approximate net weight of sixty-three jin, be sold to the foreign firm according to the stipulated weight at the price per hundred jin as clearly set forth. If the foreign price is definitely calculated as 25 taels, the contract calls for a standard value of 16 taels, 3 cash. If it is 26 taels, the standard value will be 17 taels, 3 cash; if it is 28 taels, the standard value will be 18 taels, 3 cash. If this is pure silver, however, there will be no deductions, and no additional fees will be charged for packing in tin-lined chests or for warehouse storage, as these will all be included.

When the travelling merchants transport the goods for delivery to Guangdong, then the money stipulated (4200 taels) is to be paid, as well as additional funds according to your [i.e. Fulong Bao Hang's] agreement with this firm. In the carrying out of this tea transaction, [the supplier] must select tea of the highest quality. The color of the infusion is to be light green, the packing carefully done, and every chest is to be uniform. The tea is definitely to arrive commencing in the eighth month [late September to mid-October]. By the middle of the ninth month [early November], half the shipment is to have arrived, and by the middle of the tenth month [early December] all is to have arrived—no delays will be allowed. If this period has elapsed and the goods have not arrived, and if their quality henceforth is poor, then tea will be returned to the original supplier [Fulong Bao Hang] and the silver that that firm already possesses must be returned plus interest of 1.5 percent. If the foreign ships arriving are too few, the [Fulong] Bao Hang is not allowed to reduce the stipulated amount of tea to be shipped. This is a matter of fair and mutual exchange, and this document is given as proof to the [Fulong] Bao Hang.

The Manager of the Wei Guangtai Firm (seal)
The Contractor of the Zhang Cangji Firm (seal)

Perhaps the most impressive feature of the Canton tea trade was the employment of contractual agreements to formalize the terms on which tea was supplied tea buyers and payment rendered for it. Contractuality in Western business relationships, as one recent study maintains, only attained importance in the late eighteenth century, when formal promise-keeping was elevated to a general social norm conducive to the rise of capitalist enterprises.[27] It is therefore all the more striking that records of written contracts exist at a much earlier period in China (from as early as the Tang dynasty, in fact), and that a rich variety of contractual relationships were quite common in both personal and commercial contexts by the mid-Qing era.[28]

Despite nostalgic opinions to the contrary, surviving evidence does suggest that the use of written contracts was a common element in antebellum Canton trade.[29]

27. Thomas L. Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, Part 2", *The American Historical Review*, 90:3 (June 1985), pp. 553-554.

28. See Zhao Gang and Chen Zhongyi, *Zhongguo tudi zhidu shi* (*A History of Chinese Land Systems*) (Taibei: Lianhe chuban shiye gongsi, 1982), pp. 319-322, 388-394 and also Chen and Myers, "Customary Law".

29. According to the American merchant W. C. Hunter, "No written agreement was drawn up and signed, nothing was sealed or attested." See W. C. Hunter, *The 'Fan Kwae' at Canton before Treaty Days 1825-1844* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Company, 1882), p. 96. For examples of contracts, despite Hunter's assertion, see Edwards, "Old Canton System", pp. 368-369 and the contracts reproduced in

The method of advance financing (or "forward" contracting), which the English East India Company and other foreign buyers utilized to guarantee the next season's supplies of specific types and quantities of tea, required a large amount of circulating capital. Several million foreign silver dollars were dispatched annually into the interior of China, and particularly to the major tea producing regions of South Anhui and Northwest Fujian (Fukien). It can be argued that this would never have been necessary if domestic sources of credit had been adequate to the task. Yet the fact that the source of export financing was foreign appears less significant than the sophistication with which extensive credit transactions could be handled at this juncture in Chinese history (the use of borrowed working capital and the acceptance of liberal indebtedness were, and indeed still are, characteristic of Chinese commercial practices). Contractual agreements between foreigners, Hang merchants, and interior tea producers and wholesalers served to buttress these arrangements.[30]

Two documents discovered by this writer in the course of research at the Jardine Matheson Archive at Cambridge University Library lend further weight to the above argument. Dated March-April, 1827 (Daoguang 7/3), these consist of handwritten contracts on standardized forms which record transactions between a Fujian firm supplying tea to Canton firms, which then acted as brokers in the export trade. Stipulating the quantity and quality of two large consignments (which together comprised 454,142 lbs. of congou and xiaozhong teas), the terms of payment, time of delivery, and financial penalties for default, these sources evince a high degree of specificity and commercial acumen.[31]

Discussion of the antebellum Canton tea trade in current Chinese historiography concentrates upon two themes: the increased commodity circulation (i.e. marketing) of tea during the early to mid-Qing era, and the perceived emergence of protocapitalist relations in the Chinese tea industry. Tea was one of seven commodities that together comprised some eighty per cent of mid-Qing domestic trade. According to Wu Chengming's analysis, tea accounted for approximately eight per cent of the total value of the stipulated items (besides tea, the list includes grain, salt, raw cotton, cotton cloth, raw silk, and silk goods).[32]

Using indirect evidence (an increase in the number of domestic tea marketing licenses or yin issued during the eighteenth century), Peng Zeyi has also affirmed a steady growth in the supply of tea.[33] While asserting that tea exports only amounted to about 9.3% of China's total tea production by 1840, Peng argues that the concentration of export-oriented production in certain key areas (notably Northwest Fujian, or Minbei) represented the cutting edge of incipient capitalist relations of production in the tea industry.[34]

By the late eighteenth century tea merchant capital was infiltrating the Minbei tea industry, not only in the sense of facilitating "spot" or "forward" market tea purchases, but also as an essential factor in financing tea processing. Merchants, many of whom were from Canton, Shanxi (Shansi) and Southeast Fujian, organized numerous small to middling sized tea processing workshops employing free wage labor (over ten thousand workers were said to be employed in Ouning *xian* [*hsien*] alone). Peng claims that rich merchants also rented out parcels of mountain land and hired hands to cultivate tea, thus extending their operations vertically from processing into the sphere of primary production. Minbei tea farming thus evolved into a coexistence of many petty growers utilizing household labor, a segment of rich "managerial" peasant households cultivating tea on a larger scale (perhaps with the aid of hired workers), and the aforesaid merchant capitalists.[35]

Peng's analysis is not the only source which emphasizes the intrusion of commercial capital into agricultural management and handicraft production. Recent studies dwell upon the influx of foreign silver dollars

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Dermigny, *La Chine*, Album, plates 44 and 45. Yet another contract between Chinese and American merchants, witnessed by Edward Carrington, unofficial U.S. Consul at Canton, and dated 24 September 1807, is contained in *China, Consular Record*, Carrington Collection, Manuscript Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island.

30. See Edwards, "Old Canton System", p. 373; Wakeman, "The Canton Trade", p. 170, and Samuel Ball, *An Account of the Cultivation and Manufacture of Tea in China* (London: Longmans, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1848), p. 356. On the use of credit in Chinese commercial transactions see Peter Gosling, "Both a Borrower and a Lender Be", *Southeast Asia Business*, 5 (Spring 1985), pp. 27-30.

31. Both documents are contained in the Jardine Matheson Archive, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge: B 12 Miscellaneous: Material in Chinese.

32. Wu Chengming, "Lun Qingdai qianqi woguo guonei shichang" ("A Discussion of China's Internal Markets in the Early Qing"), *Lishi yanjiu*, 1 (1983), pp. 96-106.

33. Peng Zeyi, "Qingdai qianqi chaye zubenzhuyi mengya de tedian" ("Characteristics of the Sprouts of Capitalism in the Early Qing Tea Industry"), *Zhongguo shehui jingjishi yanjiu*, 3 (1982), pp. 14-15.

34. Peng, pp. 17-18.

35. Peng, pp. 18-19, 25.

into Minbei's isolated interior mountains, the increasing volatility of local land markets resulting from this surfeit of ready money, and the impetus thus given to extreme fragmentation of "feudal" land ownership and tenural rights.[36] Still other accounts discuss the emergence of export-oriented tea cultivation in the Honan (Honam) Island suburbs of Canton itself, and the establishment there of numerous tea processing workshops and godowns based on a division of labor and the exploitation of female and child workers.[37]

Whether Marxist or formalist, the interpretations of the pre-Opium War Canton tea trade outlined above stress the vitality of commercial or mercantile capitalism, the prevalence of market trade rather than administered trade, and the florescence of patterns of dispersed commodity production and exchange of respectable scale and impressive territorial scope.[38] In the light of such cumulative historical evidence, based though it is upon the analysis of a single commodity trade, the substantivist perspective appears singularly out of place in understanding the dynamics of mid-Qing international commerce.

36. See the synopsis of Yang Guozhen's paper, "A Preliminary Study of the Unofficial Land Sales in Northern Fujian during the Qing Dynasty" in Feuerwerker, *Chinese Social and Economic History*, pp. 129-130. Yang has authored several recent articles on this theme, based on extensive documentary research, which appear in *Zhongguo shehui jingjishi yanjiu*. Also see Lin Xiangjui and Huang Zhizheng, "Shilun Qingdai Fujian nongye zubenzhuyi de mengya" ("A Preliminary Study of the Sprouts of Capitalism in Agriculture in Qing Fujian"), *Fujian shida xuebao*, 4 (1980), pp. 88-91, 93.

37. See Li Longqian, "Qingdai qianqi Guangdong diqu ruogan shougongye bumen de zubenzhuyi mengya" ("The Aggregation of Capitalist Sprouts in the Handicraft Sector in Early Qing Guangdong") in Nanjing daxue lishixi Ming Qing yanjiushi, compiler, *Zhongguo zubenzhuyi mengya wenti lunwenji* (*Collected Articles on the Problem of the Sprouts of Capitalism in China*) (Nanjing: Jiangsu jenmin chubanshe, 1983), pp. 411-412.

38. Convergence of viewpoints on this issue of course does not preclude basic differences of interpretation regarding other matters, in particular those involving socio-economic equity and the exploitation of tenants and wage laborers by the propertied. An outstanding recent effort to reconcile substantivist, formalist, and Marxist approaches to late imperial and Republican agrarian history is Philip Huang's *The Peasant Economy and Social Change in North China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985).

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The Wars They Wanted: American Missionaries' Use of *The Chinese Repository* Before the Opium War

MURRAY A. RUBINSTEIN

FROM the very day of their arrival in the Middle Kingdom American Protestant missionaries considered themselves at war. Their enemies were many. One was the heathen multitude who practiced exotic and often barbaric rites they called "religion." Another was the Chinese government which, before 1858 and the Treaties of Tianjin (Tientsin), considered Christianity to be a heterodox and dangerous sect and which acted to prevent the missionaries from propagating it. A third enemy was the Catholic Church. Various Catholic mission societies, especially Jesuits and Dominicans, had come to China in the 1500s and had successfully converted thousands to their religion. The Rites Controversy of approximately 1640 to 1742 and the antagonism it engendered during the 1661-1722 reign of the Kangxi (K'ang Hsi) Emperor brought Catholic efforts to a halt.[1] To the American evangelical Protestant of the nineteenth century, the Catholic was little better than the heathen he was trying to bring to Christ. According to this viewpoint, the Catholics hurt the cause of Christian expansion in general and evangelical Protestant activity in particular by their actions in the Rites Controversy. Thus they had to be opposed. A final enemy was that group of western merchants in Guangzhou (Canton) who were contemptuous of the American Protestant missionaries and of their cause. These traders disregarded religious obligations, refused to cooperate with missionaries and often treated them with disdain.

Thus the American Protestant missionary, newly arrived on Chinese soil in the decade before the Opium War, faced a host of enemies he had to deal with if he were to survive and fulfill his Lord's command to preach the Gospel. This essay suggests why American evangelical Protestant missionaries saw their lives and their tasks in terms of military metaphors and then shows how a specific band of missionaries—men representing American and British societies—were able to voice their hostile intent through a periodical which would be used against the various enemies they faced.

The notion of the China missionary as soldier of the Lord is not new. The church press of the nineteenth century used military terminology. It argued for the forcible opening of China. An iconoclastic and controversial student of American-Asian relations, Stuart Creighton Miller, has discussed the missionary's willingness to advocate the use of force. His essay "Ends and Means" demonstrated that this was a common trend in missionary writings in the nineteenth century.[2] Miller implied that there was an inherent contradiction between the missionary's reason for being in China—his desire to save souls—and his willingness to support military means to open China. In his conclusion Miller sought to explain away this apparent contradiction in the missionary's attitude. But Miller only touched on the issue without fully analyzing it.

There is more to be said about "the martial gestalt" of the missionary and how the missionary made the case for an active western presence in China. Contrary to Miller's suggestion, there was no contradiction between ends and means. A military cast of mind was an inherent element in the mission enterprise. A case study of this militancy was the way the American Board missionaries

1. The Rites Controversy and its impact are examined in the classic study of missionary enterprise by Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1929), pp. 102-184. See also George Minamoki, S.J., *The Rites Controversy* (Chicago, Ill: Loyola University Press, 1985).

2. Stuart Creighton Miller, "Ends and Means: Missionary Justification of Force in Nineteenth Century China" in John K. Fairbank, ed. *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 249-282. See also Miller's earlier study, *The Unwelcome Immigrant* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1969).

made their ostensibly informative magazine, *The Chinese Repository*, into a medium for waging a many-fronted assault against the various enemies they felt were facing them in China. Why did American Board missionaries and their British and Prussian allies in Canton want to see the Opium War come about? What did the missionaries do to help make this Sino-Western confrontation a reality?

Millennial Expectations and Occupational Crisis: The Environment of Militant Evangelism, 1800-1840

That men of God would promote the cause of war to bring closer the return of their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is an apparent contradiction one faces when examining Anglo-American evangelism in the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century. Yet the military metaphor as well as the military mindset were very much a part of evangelical thinking during these decades.[3]

Students of both American and British religious history have discerned two aspects of this era—usually referred to in the United States as the Second Great Awakening—which created the climate of evangelical militancy and the militant missionary mindset. One is theological. The other is socio-economic. Both will be explored in an attempt to develop a sense of the larger context of American Board missionary actions in South China in the decade of the 1830s.

The theological aspect is Millennialism. The decades from the Napoleonic Wars to the Opium War filled religious people with a certainty that the Millennium—the thousand year reign of Christ foretold in scripture—was at hand.[4] The crises Europe was passing through (crises the neutrality-minded United States could not help but become involved in) seemed to be, as theologians of the period as well as lay people viewed such things, evidence that the eschatological vision of the Book of Revelation would soon be fulfilled. There were in the very course of events clear signs and portents—if we may borrow the Han Confucian terminology—that the end of days was near.

Millennialism had always been an element in Christian thinking, but in the eighteenth century Congregationalist theologians such as Jonathan Edwards defined the concept in new terms. As Edwards, the Connecticut minister who provided the First Great Awakening with its theological justification, saw it, human action could play a part in the process of bringing closer the day of Christ's triumphant return.[5] "Disinterested Benevolence" was the term used for the process of human action: the active cooperation of man in the working out of God's own plan for humankind. The Millennium was the goal. When the two concepts were placed together they formed the core of a theology of mission. Thus was born not only a revitalized Millennial sensibility but a rationale for missionary enterprise as well.

This "New England Theology," as it became known, was developed further by Samuel Hopkins, Edwards' closest friend and supporter, who carried on the work of his mentor after Edwards' untimely death in 1760. Jonathan Edwards II and Timothy Dwight, the president of Yale, continued to popularize the concept of Disinterested Benevolence and used it as a rationale for Reformed Protestant missionary enterprise. As a result students entering Congregationalist, Reformed and Presbyterian seminaries in the early decades of the nineteenth century, such as those at Andover and Yale, were exposed to a fully developed theology of evangelism containing a well thought out theological justification for Reformed/Presbyterian/Congregational missionary enterprise.[6]

To these core concepts of Millennialism and Disinterested Benevolence these later scholars, as well as those ministers actively involved in establishing the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, added one further element: Christ's Last Com-

3. This topic is explored by Robert Handy in *A Christian America* [London: Oxford University Press, 1971]. For the roots of the Second Great Awakening see Leonard I. Sweet, "Introductory Essay", *The Evangelical Tradition in America* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press), pp. 3-12.

4. The concept of the millenium is examined by J. P. M. Sweet in his commentary on the Book of Revelation, *Revelation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979), pp. 281-290.

5. On Edwards see Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1949) and Edward H. Davidson, *Jonathan Edwards* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

6. The origins and development of the Reformed theology of missions is explored in Wolfgang Eberhard Lowe, "The First American Foreign Missionaries—the Students: An Inquiry into Their Theological Motives" (dissertation of the D.D., Brown University, Providence, R.I., 1962.) The New England theology from which it sprung is discussed in Harry Haratаunian, *From Piety to Moralism* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1932); Leonard I. Sweet, "Millenialism in America: Recent Studies," *Theological Studies* #40 (September, 1979), pp. 510-31; Nathan D. Hatch, "The Christian Movement and the Demand for a Theology of the People," *Journal of American History* 67 (December, 1980), pp. 545-67; and Nathan O. Hatch "Millenialism and Popular Religion in the Early Republic," *The Evangelical Tradition*, pp. 113-130.

mand. In the final chapter of *Mark*, the disciples are told by the risen Christ: "Go out to the whole world. Proclaim the Good News (the Gospel) to all creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. He who does not believe will be condemned."[7] Seminary students who felt the call knew that they were obeying the word of their Lord and Saviour in a way few other men could. These words provided a rationale for the militancy inherent in the missionary enterprise.

Young men such as Samuel Newell and Gordon Hall who sailed off to India as the first missionaries appointed by the American Board saw themselves as ready to battle against paganism in all its forms. Their letters home were filled with vivid descriptions of the power of that pagan and alien belief, Hinduism. They wrote these letters to show their leaders the face of the enemy and to convince them of the need to do battle with such antagonists. These letters, with a militaristic flavor as well as a subtext of Millennial theology, helped set a tone and mood for the American Board's evolving enterprise. These materials were published in the Board's own magazine, *The Panapolist*, better known by its later title, *The Missionary Herald*. To the lay and clerical readers of these periodicals, this vision of "the heathen" became accepted as the norm. The militaristic terms with which he was described became part of a common vocabulary.[8]

Theology, as important as it was, was but one force directing individuals to careers as missionaries of this evangelical and militant faith. Another was the set of socio-economic conditions at home which impelled them to choose a home far from their native New England, New York or New Jersey. The historiography of the status displacement thesis as applied to the study of evangelical religion is a rich and extensive one.[9] John M. Andrew applied the theory and expanded upon it in his study of the origins and the impact of the American mission enterprise. In *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth* Andrew argued that these men, drawn to Christian service during a time of great religious revival, found that shifting economic conditions in New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania no longer allowed them to pursue their careers in the ministry with any possibility of gaining either the status or the job security their predecessors but a generation before had enjoyed.[10] Thus, for men who lived and worked in the period 1800 to 1840, the loss of status, the existence of job insecurity, and the redefinition of the role of the minister in American society were issues which they had to deal with on a daily basis. For some the choice became clear from the day of their graduation: to journey to the ends of the earth to help make the Millennium a reality by the simple and basic act of obeying their Master's Last Command.

The missionary movement thus served as a safety valve. The ministers who founded the American Board and similar denominational missionary societies in the United States were well aware of the crisis their calling was facing. By persuading some of their students to become missionaries they relieved the pressure created by a surplus of trained religious professionals and were able to advance the cause of the Millennium which all so fervently believed in.[11]

According to Andrew, once the foreign mission movement was launched, it provided a stimulus in the United States for a revitalization of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism. More men in the field would mean more reports of missionary progress. These would result in further attention in the United States to the home base of missions and would thereby strengthen those churches which supported missionary endeavors. To American Board leaders and to other religious leaders in the United States, an "open" China and an expanded mission would be the best of all worlds. The Millennium would have been brought closer and the crisis engendered by the transition to professionalism would have been at least partially dealt with.[12]

7. Mark, chapter 16, verse 15-16, *New Testament/Jerusalem Bible* (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969), p. 118.

8. Lowe examines this aspect of theology in "The First American Missionaries," ch. 4. Cliftan Jackson Phillips explores this and other aspects of mission theology in *Protestant America and the Pagan World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).

9. For a discussion of this historiography as well as the historiography of the reformist aspects of Second Great Awakening evangelicalism see Leonard I. Sweet, "Bibliographic Essay," *The Evangelical Tradition*, pp. 33-55.

10. John M. Andrew, *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1976). This crisis and the transition in the role of minister during this period is discussed by Donald M. Scott in his *From Office to Profession* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978).

11. The problem of Edward's and Hopkins' influence continues to be a subject of debate. Joseph Conforti makes the case for their influence in *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement* (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1981). Stephan Berk argues against it in his *Calvinism Versus Democracy* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1974).

12. One way one can demonstrate the validity of both Andrews' thesis and my expansion of it is to examine the Board's own publications and to show how the Board made use of missionary letters and other types of missionary data in these publications. See Murray A. Rubinstein, "The Northeastern Connection", *Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica*, 9 (July 1980), pp. 433-453.

How do the theological concerns and the professional crisis relate to the willingness of the missionaries to advocate the use of force? The linkage between hypothesis and reality is found in the careers of the men who came to China to serve the American Board's South China Mission.

The American men who came to China in the years from 1830 to 1840 were products of the Second Great Awakening. David Abeel, Elijah Coleman Bridgman, Edwin Stevens, Samuel Wells Williams, Ira Tracy, and Peter Parker were from those areas of the United States most affected by Presbyterian/Congregational/Reformed awakenings. Each was raised in a family of notable piety. Each of these men was immersed in an evangelical atmosphere in his own community. Bridgman was taken to religious revivals in his native Belchertown, Massachusetts. Williams' son and biographer, Frederick Wells Williams, told about the religious services his father went to and the revivalist climate of his father's home in Utica, New York, a short distance from the "Burned Over District" that Whitney Cross and other historians have studied.[13]

Each of these men underwent the conversion experience and became "born again," as the term was understood in the early nineteenth century: they became members of their local church communities and lived more quiet yet more intense lives from that point. Childhood was now a thing of the past. This classic rite of Reformed passage meant more to these men than it did to many of their peers. The descriptions Bridgman, Parker, and Abeel have given reveal personal religious experiences of such intensity that they determined the path of their personal and professional lives. During their college years most of them decided to go on to seminary. Williams was the exception. He wanted to go to Yale but was forced by circumstances to attend the then just opened Rensselaer Institute and, after graduation, went to China to serve as an unordained mission printer. Most attended divinity school and in the seminaries they attended—Andover, Yale, and the Dutch Reformed Seminary in New Brunswick, New Jersey—they were instructed in evangelical Millenarian theology. Because this creed served to deepen their already established sensibilities, they made it their own. Only one man of the group, Abeel, first served as a pastor in New York before deciding to become a missionary. The others all decided to serve as missionaries before they became ordained.[14]

These men made a conscious choice to try to bring the word of God to "the heathen." By 1827 the American Board was considering China as a site for a mission station. Some of these men were recruited in 1828 and 1829, the remnant as the mission expanded over the course of the 1830s. This specific set of individuals became exponents of religious and cultural imperialism. How these men reached China and how they established a periodical to bring the Millennium closer will be examined next.

The Periodical Established: Western Missionaries and The Chinese Repository

The *Repository* was the verbal expression of the hostile intention which American, Prussian, and British missionaries living and working in Canton in the 1830s felt towards the Chinese Empire and towards their other enemies. How did these missionaries come to publish this magazine, and what was it like?

The missionary community which decided to edit and publish the *Repository* was a small one which grew steadily over the course of the 1830s. For the first three decades of the nineteenth century that evangelical missionary community consisted of one man, Robert Morrison, a representative of the London Missionary Society, who had first come to China in 1807 and worked alone, for the most part, striving to create the foundation for a larger Protestant missionary enterprise. He knew Chinese and because of this was able to become the translator for the British East India Company. In 1820 he became a secretary of the American Board and was able to supply them with articles and letters he had written.[15] Such articles were published in *The Mission-*

13. The details of the early lives of these missionaries is to be found in the standard biographies of them written soon after their deaths in the nineteenth century and in Murray A. Rubinstein, "The Missionaries," *Zion's Corner* (unpublished manuscript, 1979), pp. 82-93. See also Whitney A. Cross, *The Burned-Over District* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1950) and Glenn C. Alischuler and Jan M. Soltzgaber, *Revivalism, Social Conscience, and Community in the Burned-Over District* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983).

14. Rubinstein, *Zion's Corner*, pp. 93-103. Parker's conversion and his education are also examined in Edward U. Gulick, *Peter Parker and the Opening of China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 1-23.

15. On Morrison see Mrs. Robert Morrison, *Memoirs of the Life and Labors of Robert Morrison, D.D.*, Vol. II (London 1839), William John Townshend, *Robert Morrison, the Pioneer of Chinese Missions* (London 1888), and Lindsay Aide, *Robert Morrison, the Scholar and the Man* (Hong Kong 1957). The major collection of primary source material which deals with Morrison is the archives of the Council for World Missions, housed at the Library of the School of African and Oriental Studies of the University of London.

ary Herald.[16] The Board used these articles to make the American Reformed/Presbyterian/Congregational public aware of China and conscious of the need to send missionaries there.

By the late 1820s Morrison had been able to build a following among sympathetic British and American merchants. One of his closest friends was the New York trader David W. C. Olyphant. Olyphant proved willing to work with the British missionary and he also wished to expand the evangelical Protestant presence in South China. Thus in the fall of 1827 Morrison, Olyphant and several pious associates wrote a letter to the American Board requesting that missionaries be sent to China to expand the base of the Protestant enterprise.[17] The Board responded positively to this request, for they had reached a similar decision on their own: that they now commit themselves to establishing a mission in South China.[18]

Late in February of 1830 two men, Elijah Coleman Bridgman and David Abeel, arrived in the Guangdong (Kwangtung) port of Canton. Abeel remained in China but a short time during what proved to be his first tour of duty. He returned in 1839 as a missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church. Bridgman remained and was to stay in China until the middle of the 1840s, when he returned to the United States for a brief home leave. He went back to China a few years later and spent the rest of his life in the Middle Kingdom, first working in Canton and later founding an American Board mission in Shanghai. He died and was buried in Shanghai in 1861. During his first tour he worked closely with Morrison, who became his friend, mentor, and co-worker. Over the course of 1830 and 1831 Bridgman learned Chinese and thereafter translated Christian works, preached to people in the streets of the western suburbs of Canton, and taught a group of boys who became his personal servants.[19]

While he was able to accomplish much in these two years he was well aware that his position and Morrison's were dangerous. In the 1830s China was still closed to Western missionaries—whether Catholic or Protestant—and Christianity was defined by the Qing government as a heterodox religion and thus proscribed.[20] Despite this very real danger, these men and Edwin Stevens, Ira Tracy, and Samuel Wells Williams, who joined with them later in the decade would not be deterred. They continued to learn Chinese—an illegal undertaking for a Westerner in China—and continued to publish and distribute tracts and, whenever possible, talk about their religion to any Chinese who would listen. All of this was done at risk, for during times of tension government dragnets would trap Chinese who helped Christians spread their religion. The missionaries knew that the government was aware of their presence and could arrest them or throw them out of the country when it wished. In working in this fashion these men were doing what their acknowledged mentor, Morrison, had done in the decades before their arrival: building a foundation for Protestant missionary enterprise.[21]

They felt frustrated and wished that more could be done. They felt stronger measures must be used against their heathen foe, that oppressive and openly hostile Beijing-based imperial government. They tried to show others what China was really like by giving both their fellow Westerners in Canton and their fellow evangelicals in America and in Great Britain a clear picture of Chinese life, warts and all. They could in doing so attack their Catholic rivals by "correcting" the very positive image of China which Jesuits and other Papist mission orders had created in works published between 1600 and 1800. They felt they had to develop a publication which would serve these ends as well as win support from Western traders who lived in Canton and Macao.

Morrison had worked with another London Missionary Society representative, William Milne, on a similar publication during the 1810s and 1820s. *The Indo-Chinese Gleaner* began publication in Malacca in 1817 and continued to be produced until 1822. Morrison contributed both articles and financial support. After Milne died in 1822 and production was halted, Morrison continued to send articles to English language periodicals in Singapore, Penang, and Malacca. In 1827, the same year he and Olyphant drafted their letter to the American Board, Morrison tried to set up *The Indo-Chinese*

16. For example, *The Missionary Herald,* June 1821; *The Missionary Herald,* October 1822; and *The Missionary Herald,* May 1823.

17. Robert Morrison and D. W .C. Olyphant to American Board, November 19, 1927, Missionary Research Library, Union Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y.

18. Jeremiah Evarts to Robert Morrison, 17 June 1828 in Morrison, *Memoirs,* pp. 404-405.

19. The basic archival materials on this period in South China Mission history are 16, B. vol. I, the American Board Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

20. Latourette, *History of Missions;* and Minamaki, *The Rites Controversy,* passim.

21. Alexander Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867), pp. 3-11, 60-75, 76-80, 81-85.

Repository which was designed as a replacement for the *Gleaner*.[22]

When Bridgman arrived and proved to be a man he could work with, Morrison began to consider the possibility of publishing an English language magazine in China which would deal with things Chinese. Morrison pressed Bridgman about the idea and he agreed. As the American Board Missionary noted in a letter to his superiors, "Morrison seems more and more anxious to have a public vehicle to carry abroad this point [that a China mission was a necessity]. We contemplate a periodical something like that in Bombay."[23] Plans for the publication were set by early March of 1832, but actual publication could begin only when fonts for the press arrived by ship from the United States. By May 5th its first two half sheets had been completed and on 31 May 1832 the entire first issue was ready for distribution.[24]

Publication of the *Repository* continued for twenty years, and while there would be changes in format and editorship, the basic objectives remained the same. Only when interest in the *Repository* waned in the late 1840s did missionaries consider the possibility of suspending publication. They finally did so in 1852.[25] There is an ironic postscript to all of this. It appears that the magazine was missed. A decade or so after the demise of the *Repository* a new publication, *The China Recorder*, began publication. This new incarnation of the *Repository* was published until the 1940s.

The missionaries and those merchants and lay people who joined them in the publication of the *Repository* all felt that they had a stake in its continued existence. They worked hard to make it a well-respected journal which merchants in China and interested churchmen and lay people in Great Britain and America could turn to for information about the Middle Kingdom. A typical issue would contain a book review.[26] It might also contain a detailed article on Chinese history[27] or geography.[28] Translations of Chinese poetry or prose and essays on Chinese grammar might also be included.[29] When missionaries and merchants set up benevolent societies such as the Morrison Education Society, the Medical Missionary Society, or the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, the *Repository* would usually publish the minutes of these meetings.[30] Thus the *Repository* provided the reader with a sense that he was witnessing at first hand the growth of a large scale and ambitious Western benevolent enterprise.

This publicity helped missionaries secure contributions for organizations which were, to some hard-nosed merchants, somewhat more acceptable than purely religious institutions. To further please merchants, the editors were careful to cover the trade scene. Articles on the opium trade and on the different perceptions of diplomacy—Western and Chinese—often appeared. Each issue concluded with a "Journal of Occurrences" and this, too, contained information about diplomatic and economic problems then developing.[31]

Thus the *Repository* gave information about an exotic land that some readers knew first hand but that many only heard about from afar. The periodical covered general news events in China, especially those of interest to businessmen, as well as news of the mission station. How, more particularly, did the journal serve as an ex-

22. The origins and development of the Chinese Repository have been examined in Elizabeth L. Malcolm, "The Chinese Repository and Western Literature on China, 1800 to 1850," *Modern Asian Studies*, 7, 2, (1973) pp. 165-166. As useful as Ms. Malcolm's work is, it is incomplete because the author was not able to examine either the London Missionary Society archives or the American Board archives and thus study the unpublished material available which deals with the origins and development of this important magazine. As is clear from the citation, I have done so and thus the picture I am able to draw is somewhat different from hers.

23. Bridgman to Evarts, 26 March 1832, in A.B.C. 16.3.8, Vol. I.

24. Bridgman to Anderson, 31 May 1832, in A.B.C. 16.3.8, Vol. I.

25. What would also remain the same throughout *The Repository's* publication history was the tension between the Board officers in Boston and those missionaries who worked on the magazine in Canton. At first the Board was pleased with *The Repository*, but slowly it began to be felt that Bridgman and the other missionaries were spending too much time working the magazine and too little time working on more religious activities. The missionaries responded that they were working to make the magazine self-supporting and had in fact almost reached such a point in the late 1830s. This success threatened the Board even more, for it now lost the Damocles Sword with which it threatened its missionaries. This struggle over the magazine would go on for twenty years. On the conflict in its early stages see Rubinstein, "Zion's Corner," opt. 5-10.

26. For example, "Review (history by Alvarez Semedo)," *The Chinese Repository* (hereafter abbreviated "CR"), Vol. I (April 1833), pp. 473-487.

27. "Remarks on the History of China in the middle ages," CR, Vol. II (July 1833), pp. 111-116.

28. "Description of the city of Canton," CR, Vol. II (August 1833), pp. 145-160.

29. "The Chinese Language," CR, Vol. II (May 1834), pp. 1-38.

30. "Fourth Annual Report of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge," CR, Vol. VII, (Nov., 1838), pp. 329-340. "First annual report of the Morrison Education Society," CR, Vol. VI, (September 1837), pp. 229-243.

31. "British Authorities in China," CR, Vol. III (December 1834), pp. 345-363. "Free Trade with China" by a British Merchant, CR, Vol. II (December 1833), pp. 355-373. "British authorities in China," CR, Vol. III (December 1834), B, pp. 345-363. "Free Trade with China" by a British Merchant, Vol. II (December 1833), pp. 355-373. "Journal of Occurrences," CR, Vol. III (Dec., 1834), pp. 391-93.

pression of the missionaries' hostile intent toward diverse enemies?

The Repository as an Expression of Aggressive Intent

The *Repository* can be seen as an expression of hostile intent because it contained direct attacks on those it was nominally reporting upon in an objective fashion. As already suggested, its enemies were the Chinese—both the people and their government—and the Catholic missionaries who had, in the previous three centuries, created a positive image of China. More particularly, the *Repository* was an instrument which the missionaries, and certain merchants who worked with them, used to mold Western opinion toward China and to create a climate of public opinion in which war with China was seen as a viable course of Western, and more precisely, British foreign policy.

In the lead article of the first issue Bridgman spelled out his reasons for publishing the magazine: "The empire, of which as residents we form constituent atoms, stands at this moment, as a stupendous anomaly." As interesting as China might be, it was not the easiest place to observe at first hand. "By what right of inheritance, by what favorite law of justice and propriety a very large portion of the earth's surface is made impassable, it is not easy to understand. A vast domain . . . and with the exception of the Russian establishment at Peking consisting of only ten persons, and a very narrow place at Canton and Macao foreigners can by no means be permitted to enter or reside in it." Westerners were not free to wander in China at will or to trade or to convert its vast citizenry.

Bridgman explained to his readers that the picture of the Middle Kingdom which they possessed was out of date or seriously distorted, based as it was upon obsolete works filled with misinformation. A useful step, the missionary/scholar suggested, was to critique the earlier sets of books: "Many of the old books contain much that is worthless as to prevent their republication." The *Repository* would provide its readers with critiques of sinological literature, especially of books written by members of Catholic missionary orders that had been in China since the late Ming period. Interestingly, the Protestant critique of China was similar to the very critique which Chinese radicals were making of their own society and government. An ostensibly high minded and objective critiquing of earlier literature was really part of a larger evangelical Protestant attack on the Catholic scholarly establishment. It was a subtle but very real aspect of the full scale war on Catholicism then going on in the United States under the rubric of "the Protestant Crusade." Bridgman would "correct" the "false" (and too often positive) image the Catholics drew of China by making use of Chinese sources to present a more "balanced" picture of Chinese reality. Bridgman noted: "Sufficient weight has not been given to native authorities" but then added: "While we would allow them their proper influence, we shall try to avoid the opposite extreme. We have no strong expectations of finding much that will rival the arts and sciences and various institutions of the West." There were two enemies—those Westerners who would paint too favorable a picture of China and those Chinese who would, by their very words, defend the power and the glory of their own tradition. Both were attacked in the name of scholarly balance. Once Westerners learned "the truth" about China and its lamentable lack of knowledge about the Gospel, they would rally around and support the missionaries who brought Christ's message of salvation to China's teeming millions. The militancy in all of this can be seen in what the missionaries saw as the path before them. "The efforts to accomplish a work so vast," Bridgman concluded, must be "various, well directed, and long continued; requiring patience, self-denial, meekness, gentleness, and the sterner qualities which can cheerfully endure hardness, stripes, and death."[32]

Additional articles in the magazine demonstrate just how the missionaries saw their enemies. The Chinese people were one enemy. The Chinese government was another. The *Repository* argued that Chinese people clung with fervor to a flawed religion, culture and politics. The *Repository* published articles asserting that the Chinese possessed a formal system of religion which would prevent Christian evangelization, and was, therefore, a system which deserved to be eliminated. One such article focused upon the Sacred Edict of the Kangxi Emperor promulgated in 1670. This official document was meant to be read in each town in the empire and contained basic tenets of Confucian orthodoxy.[33] Another article dealt with the Emperor's prayer for rain.[34] Another examined the pattern of mourning

32. "Introduction," CR, Vol. I (May 1832), pp. 1-6.
33. "The Sacred Edict," CA, Vol. II (December 1833), pp. 297-313.
34. "Prayer for Rain," CR, Vol. I. (October 1832) pp. 236-239.

which followed the death of the Empress.[35] "The State Religion" provided readers with a survey of the formal and official religious system,[36] as did "Religious Observances of the Government."[37] The *Repository* defined Confucianism in "Theology as Contained in the Classics,"[38] "The Worship of Confucius,"[39] and "Demonaltry, or the Worship of Dead Men."[40] Ancestor worship as a more formalized system was explored in "Worshipping at the Tombs"[41] and "the Tombs of Ancestors."[42] The actual literature of Confucian orthodoxy was detailed in an overview of the Five Classics and the Four Books.[43] Buddhism was discussed in an article which introduced what the missionaries termed a "Buddhistic novel."[44] Buddhist practices were focused upon in an article which explained shamanism to the *Repository's* readers.[45]

In addition to these specific pieces there were more general articles which attempted to paint a large scale picture of the heathen Chinese environment. The clearest manifestation of "heathenism" was official intolerance of Protestant Christianity. A *Repository* article focused upon the troublesome matter of heterodoxy as defined by Chinese officials. Since the days of the Kangxi and Yungzheng Emperors, 1661-1736, Chinese officials condemned Christianity as a heterodox faith.[46] "Remarks on the Religion of the Chinese," discussed the difficulties of introducing Christianity into China. Its author, the Prussian missionary Karl Friedrich Gutzlaff, had long labored as a missionary in Southeast and East Asia and used the article to vent his pent-up frustration.[47]

In addition to these pieces on religion, missionaries wrote numerous articles and vignettes on governmental administration.[48] These sometimes appeared in a section titled "Notices of Modern China." One such piece dealt with the role of the local magistrate. It gave the readers a clear idea of what tasks the magistrate was assigned and of just what difficulties he faced.[49] Another piece focused upon those officers who served the local magistrate. It presented an unflattering portrait of how prefectural government functioned.[50] Later articles focused upon the local judicial system. The editors expressed the hope that the reader would compare Chinese law to the system he knew in America or in Great Britain. In any such comparison the Chinese system could not but suffer.[51]

The subtext of such articles on Chinese government seems to be that only when the Chinese were exposed to Western political thought and understood Western law would they have the tools necessary to change their system for the better. The missionaries had been preparing just such materials and had attempted to distribute them. Thus the missionaries were not simply critics of the system. They were would-be reformers as well. The message to American and English readers was that the way to effectively move China away from heathenism was to support the American missionary effort. By stressing the negative aspects of Chinese political structures the missionaries were making a case for their own importance, for continued support, and for Western pressure to change the Chinese system. By preparing articles and books on political theory and political methods in Chinese the missionaries were also educating the future Chinese elite. Thus the Chinese state, as

35. "Death of the Empress," CR, Vol. II (September 1833), pp. 212-214.

36. "The State Religion," CR, Vol. III (June 1834), p. 2.

37. "Religious Observances of the Government," CR, Vol. VI (March 1838), pp. 551.

38. "Theology as Contained in the Classics," CR, Vol. III (November 1833) pp. 310-312.

39. "The Worship of Confucius," CA, Vol. I (April 1833), pp. 502.

40. "Demonaltry, or the Worship of Dead Men," CR, Vol. II (July 1833) pp. 134.

41. "Worshipping at the Tombs," CR, Vol I (September).

42. "The Tombs of Ancestors," CR, vol. I (April 1833) 12, 409-502.

43. "The Five Classics and the Four Books," CR, Vol. III (July 1834) 97-106.

44. "Remarks Concerning the Religion and the Priests of Budha," "Visiting a Budhist templt," "'Story of the Fragrant Hill', and Budhistic Novel," CR, Vol. II (September 1833), pp. 214-224.

45. "The Catechism of the Shamans and the Laws and Regulations of the Priesthood of the Budha in China," CR, Vol. I (November 1832), pp. 285-289.

46. "Heterodoxy," CR, Vol. I (July 832), pp. 103.

47. "Remarks on the Religion of the Chinese," CR, Vol. IV (October 1835), pp. 271-276.

48. "Penal Laws of China," CR, Vol. II (June 1833), pp. 61-73; CR Vol. II (July 1833), pp. 97-110; Laws "The Chinese Government and Constitution," CR, Vol. IV (May, 1835), pp. 11-16; "Political Divisions of the Chinese Empire," CR, Vol. IV (June 1835), pp. 49-58; "Structure of the Chinese Government," CR, Vol. IV (July 1835), pp. 135-150; "Structure of the Chinese Government," CR, Vol. IV (October 1835), pp. 276-286.

49. "Notices of Modern China," CR, Vol. IV (August 1835), pp. 160-166.

50. For example see Ch'u T'ung-Tsu, *Local Government in China Under the Ch'ing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962) and John Watt, *The District Magistrate in Late Imperial China* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1972).

51. "Notices," CR, Vol. IV (November 1835), pp. 335-340.

well as the Chinese populace, was an enemy that the *Repository* attacked.

Another enemy was the Catholic Church that had done much to create a positive image of China. Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, and members of other Catholic orders had been active in China since the Ming Dynasty, ca. 1368-1644. While they had converted tens of thousands, they had hurt their own cause in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries by involving the Qing state in a debate over questions of doctrine. As a result of the Rites Controversy Christianity was defined as a heterodox creed and those who followed it were subject to persecution, while those Westerners and Chinese who attempted to spread it were harassed and often barred from Chinese soil.[52] The evangelical Protestant missionaries were quick to blame Catholicism for the problems they faced in China. They felt that Catholic writers had been too effective in creating a positive image of China in the West. How could one attack a people so enlightened as the Chinese were represented to be? How could one force this most enlightened of despotisms to change its ways when Europeans saw in China models that could be applied to their own political environments? Thus the Catholics, in addition to the simple fact that they were Catholics and thus the mortal enemies of all churches created in the wake of the Reformation, had made the American missionary's task in China more difficult.

The attack on Catholicism took three forms. First, the missionaries attacked the positive image of China which Catholics had created in their writings over the centuries. In the introduction to the *Repository* Bridgman said that this would be done and we have seen how it was attempted. Second, the missionaries wrote review articles which criticized various Catholic writings on China. Finally, the missionaries wrote articles on the Catholic Church in China and wrote other pieces in which, in the process of advocating the spread of the Gospel, they soundly criticized Catholic efforts and directly blamed the Catholic mission orders for the dangers that the Protestants and their handful of Chinese converts faced.

The first form of the attack on Catholics was oblique and indirect. The second form was quite straight forward and thus more effective. Bridgman published a critical review of the Jesuit Louis le Compte's account of his travels through China.[53] This long article critiqued a major work, one well known in Europe. A second unfavorable review of a Catholic book appeared in April of 1833. Alvarez Semedo, a Portugese missionary scholar, had written a history of China which was subjected to intense scrutiny by Bridgman, Edwin Stevens and their Prussian associate Karl Gutzlaff. In 1841 another Catholic missionary work was negatively reviewed, an English translation of a Spanish work on China which had been written in 1588.[54]

Various historical accounts of Catholic missionary development were published in the *Repository* by Gutzlaff and the others. The concluding section of an article on the history of China contained an unflattering discussion of Roman Catholic missions and Papal legations to the Chinese court.[55] In another article on Spanish relations with China, Catholic missions were critically examined.[56] Six months later the Catholic presence in Macao was unfavorably mentioned. In an article on the promulgation of the Gospel Samuel Wells Williams argued that Catholics had given Chinese cause to fear Christian missions. They thus became obstacles to Christian progress by the very fact of their activism.[57]

These reviews and articles which discredited the Catholics served as a means of reinforcing the point that the missionaries had been making in their other articles—that China could not be seen in a positive light and that works which attempted to make such a case were either out of date or deeply flawed or both. Catholics were thus a major enemy and any means to undercut their influence was to the good.

The 'Forward Position': The Repository's Advocacy of 'Opening' China

Having discredited both Chinese institutions and their Roman Catholic defenders, the *Repository* attempted to convince readers and leaders in the West that China should be "opened" through an aggressive and dynamic policy. This position was already advocated by many members of the Canton business community and

52. On the Catholic effort and the Rites Controversy see Latiouretia, *History of Christian Missions* 78-184. George Minamaki's new study takes it up to the 20th century. Minamaki, *The Rites Controversy*.

53. "Review," CR, Vol. 1 (October 1832), pp. 249-268.

54. "The Historie of the Great and Mightie Kingdom of China," CA, Vol. K (May 1841), pp. 242-250.

55. "Review," CR, Vol. 1 (March 1833), pp. 425-451.

56. "Miscellanies-Spanish Relations with China," CR, Vol. 1 (December 1833), pp. 350-354.

57. "Contribution to an Historical Sketch of the Domanists at Macao," CR, Vol. III (May 1834, 1), pp. 43-44; "Promulgation of the Gospel in China," CR, Vol. III, pp. 428-37.

their merchant-allies in the West. The "forward position"—to compel the Chinese government to open their nation to Western trade—was advocated the very first year the *Repository* was published. In an article entitled "intercourse with the Chinese," the author attacked the Chinese government and its policy of limited contact and expressed the hope that the difficulties which the missionaries and other Westerners faced would soon be overcome. The missionaries, as agents of cultural and religious change, desired a ". . . traffic in intellectual and moral commodities."[58]

One tactic the missionaries used in their articles was to demonstrate that China was weak and thus almost ripe for the taking. The "Journal of Occurrences" noted that "the weakness of the Chinese government is in nothing more evinced that in its fear not only of large bodies of men combined for secular political purposes, but also of small religious groups."[59] Another article presented a "contemporary view" of the issue of free trade, tracing the evolution of British frustrations.[60]

Another article examined the way the Chinese government dealt with the crime of homicide and focused upon cases involving Chinese and Westerners. The problem had arisen a number of times and a famous case involved an American seaman. In the piece Chinese judicial practices were taken to task and the system was shown to be inferior to that in existence in the West.[61] The missionaries again set the stage for change, for such an article foreshadowed the imposition of extraterritoriality.

In the summer of 1834, when Lord Napier took over as Superintendent of Trade, Bridgman and S. Wells Williams published a series of articles under the umbrella title of "Free Intercourse with China," in which various members of the Western community expressed their views on this issue.[62] The missionaries also included selections from such British periodicals as *The Westminster Review*, *The Quarterly*, and from a newspaper, *The Spectator*.[63] By publishing this article the missionaries had given their reading public a clear picture of the problems of the Western relationships with China. When Napier arrived and undertook his ill-fated attempt to change the basic pattern of Sino-Western relations, missionaries were on the scene as actors as well as observers. The *Repository* published Bridgman's sermon delivered at Lord Napier's funeral.[64] In November a twenty-seven page *Repository* article began with Napier's arrival at Canton, traced the path of British action, Chinese response, British counteraction, and finally the climactic confrontation which ended with stoppage of trade, a battle between British warships and Chinese artillery in the Bogue, Napier's retreat, his long journey down river, and his death in Macao.[65]

These articles were but the precursors of a flood of similar pieces which began appearing in the *Repository* in the years that immediately followed. A January 1835 article examined the problems involved in negotiating with the Chinese, which the author saw as "rights and duties not acknowledged by the Chinese."[66] The missionaries pleaded that other Westerners show interest in Chinese souls as well as Chinese markets.[67] The missionaries established a clear linkage between their objectives and those of the Western merchants and diplomats (who were often the same persons in the Canton of the 1830s).[68] The March 1835 issue contained a further attack on the Chinese view of diplomacy.[69] In September of 1835, the missionaries discussed the feasibility of establishing colonies of Christians in East Asia. This may be seen as an optimistic look ahead to the day when converts were sufficiently numerous to form actual communities. In fact such a day was already near at hand for, as Jon Paul Wiest has demonstrated, but a few years after the signing of the Treaty of Tianjin there were Guandong villages which were dominated by lineages which were almost entirely Catholic.[70] A February 1836

58. "Intercourse with the Chinese," CR, Vol. I (August 1832), pp. 141-147.

59. "Journal of Occurrences," CR, Vol. 1 (September 1832), pp. 207.

60. "Free Trade," CR, Vol. II (December 1833), pp. 355-373.

61. "Homicides in China," CR, Vol. III (May 1834), pp. 38-40.

62. On the background to the Napier Affair see Hosea Ballou Morse's classic account, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. I (Taipei: Ching Wen, 1971 (reprint) 118-144. See also Peter Ward Fay, *The Opium War* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), pp. 67-79.

63. "Free Intercourse with China," CR, Vol. III (July 1833), pp. 128-137.

64. "Funeral Sermon," CR, Vol. III (October 1834), pp. 271-284.

65. "British Authorities in China," CR, Vol. III (November 1834), pp. 324-343.

66. "Negotiations with China," CR, Vol. III (January, 1835), pp. 417-427.

67. "Promulgation of the Gospel in China," CR, Vol. III (January 1835) pp. 428-437.

68. "Universal Peace," CR, Vol. III (March 1835), pp. 516-527.

69. "Christian Missions in China," CR, Vol. III (April 1835), pp. 559-568.

70. Jon Paul Wiest, "Lineage and Patterns of Conversion in Kwangdong," *Ch'ing-shih Wen-t'i*, Vol. 4, 7 (June 1982) pp. 1-32.

article argued that a new formal treaty with the Chinese was needed and suggested various means which could be used to bring about negotiations for such a treaty.[71]

Opium, that deadly but most valuable commodity in the China trade, was discussed in considerable detail in the summer of 1836 in an article containing a translation of a memorial of the opium trade.[72] It was the first of many such pieces which argued that although the missionaries would continue to support the merchants in their desire to open China, they were not willing to support the continued importation and sale of a drug as deadly as opium. They had witnessed first hand its effects and decided to inform their public in as vivid terms as possible just what the evils of the drug were. In November of that same year they published an English Missionary's attack on the trade.[73] They announced that a money prize would be given for an essay which dealt with the effects of the opium trade upon the "commercial, political, and moral interests of the nations."[74] While the missionaries attacked these evils, they were careful to continue to publish pieces on free trade and diplomacy, including remarks by a number of key British merchants, such as Matheson of Jardine and Matheson, H. H. Lindsay, George Staunton, and J. Goddard.[75] The missionaries were being careful. While they felt they had to speak out on opium as a moral evil, they still wished that those involved in the opium trade would continue to work with them. They tried to walk the fence, and these issues of the *Repository* show how they were attempting to do so.

By January, 1837, it was clear that a new phase in British policy was under way. The "quiescent policy" of Staunton was being replaced by the aggressive policy of Captain Charles Elliot. Elliot was not going to move in as foolhardy a fashion as Napier and was careful to follow acceptable methods in contacting Chinese officials and in requesting their permission for his move to Canton. Throughout this period the missionaries tried to walk a delicate line. Coverage of the opium trade was balanced with coverage of deteriorating diplomatic relationships.[76]

Events took on a momentum of their own in 1837 and 1838. As the Chinese began attempting to deal with the opium trade, financial difficulties hit various hong merchants. British merchants felt ever more threatened by Chinese governmental efforts to halt the flow of their most profitable commerce.[77] The nature and tone of *Repository* articles from December 1837 through March 1838 reflected the tension which would be expressed in aggressive action by the Chinese and in an equally aggressive response by British authorities.[78]

Conclusion

As the missionaries covered these events they argued to British and American publics that war was the alternative to repression by the Chinese. The missionaries used the *Repository* as both an expression of their hostile intent against the Chinese and as an instrument for influencing British and American public opinion. Both uses were complimentary. In attacking China and in detailing the merchant case, they were preparing the British and American public for war and were providing the rationales for that war.

The Opium War which finally began in 1839 was a war that the missionaries and their merchant allies long wanted to see happen. Did they help bring about that war? If one can argue that by presenting China as a nation in need of change, that by depicting the Chinese as in desperate need of personal salvation and moral

71. "Treaty with the Chinese," CR, Vol. IV (February 1835), pp. 441-449.

72. "Remarks on the Opium Trade with China," CR, Vol. V (November 1836), pp. 297-304.

73. "Temperance," CR, Vol. V (November 1835), pp. 2289-296.

74. CR, Vol. V (January 1836).

75. "Relations between the United States of America and China," CA, Vol. V (September 1836), pp. 218-230; "Free Intercourse between China and Christendon," CA, Vol. V (October, 1836), pp. 241-258.

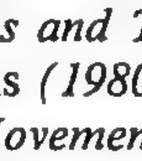
76. "British Relations with China," CR, Vol. V (January 1837), pp. 422-426; "Edict. . . . .", "Cultivation . . .". "J/O: Opium Trade," CR, Vol. V (Feb., 1837), pp. 462-469, 470-475, 479-480; "On the Preparation of Opium . . .", CR, Vol. V (March, 1837), pp. 495-506; "Embassies to the Chinese," CR, Vol. V (March 1837), pp. 518-523; "Traffic in Opium . . .", "Remarks on the opium trade," "odmonitary pictures," "Premium," CR, Vol. V (April 1837), pp. 546-552, 570, 571-572, 573-574; and "Journal of Occurrences: Her Britannic Majesty's Commission at Canton," CR. Vol. V (April 1837), pp. 576-579.

77. On this period, see the narrative in Fay, *The Opium War*, pp. 110-196. For a detailed picture of Chinese policy during this period see Hsin-Pao Chang, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 85-120.

78. "Trade with China," "Free Intercourse with Eastern Asia," "J/O: Hingtoe's Bankruptcy, Burning of Opium," CR, Vol. VI (December 1837), pp. 381-386, 390-392, 400; "J/O: Seizure of Opium," CA, Vol. VI (January 1838), pp. 447-448. "Memorial from the Governor . . .," CR, Vol. VI (February 1838), pp. 473-478; "Application of Powers of the Consul . . .," "Foreign relations . . .," "Memorial to . . . Palmerston," "A Respectful Address to the . . . Governor of Kangtung and Kwangse," CR, Vol. VI (March 1838), pp. 497-527, 528-539, 540-542, 543-544; and "J/O. Review of Forces, Burning of Opium," CR, Vol. VI (March 1838), pp. 551-553.

improvement, that by creating an argument for war in a widely circulated and widely respected journal they could influence the course of public opinion and in turn convince governments that they needed to act, then the answer is a strong yes. The caveat is the problem of determining the effect of that given media source, that magazine, on public opinion. Even today, with sophisticated research tools at our disposal, attempts to gauge the effect of the media on public attitudes is problematical. How much more so is the case when dealing with a media campaign carried on at long range in the years from 1832 to 1840.

What can be said is this: The missionaries' training and mindset made them willing to accept war as a viable means of achieving a certain end. To achieve that end and to educate a Western public interested in obtaining information about exotic lands, they published a monthly magazine which took China to task for what it was and which called for Western nations to do their Christian duty and forcibly change that heathen nation and its closed minded, despotic government. In the end, the British government fought the war the missionaries had called for. The missionaries had done as much as or more than any other group to help the British and American publics see why such a war was necessary. God would be served by the use of the sword. British warships and troops became weapons of God. By 1840 the war they wanted was under way and a new missionary and merchant invasion was soon to follow in its wake.



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China's New Historical Archives

FREDERIC WAKEMAN, JR.

THE last two imperial dynasties of Chinese history, the Ming (1368-1644) and the Qing (1644-1911), brought the administrative technology of Confucian bureaucracy to its highest point. The forms of political discourse were refined and codified, and the communications channels of the government—the arteries of the empire—were enlarged and reinforced. The High Qing state that dominated East Asia in the eighteenth century was built upon a mountain of paper documents, and one of the keys to controlling the power of the monarchy was regulating the "pathway of words" that united the ruler with his ministers and officials throughout the realm.

For decades now, Western historians have approached an understanding of late imperial China through Ming and Qing documents. Thousands of these were officially printed in nineteenth-century compilations, and tens of thousands more were discovered bricked into storerooms within the Forbidden City during the 1920s. It was not until the 1960s, however, that original documents from the imperial archives were made available on Taiwan, where the Nationalists stored a portion of the collection they had brought with them from the Palace Museum in Beijing. Some of approximately 800,000 documents from the Qing archives were carefully catalogued in the new Palace Museum that Chiang Kai-shek's regime erected outside Taipei. After 1970, collections of these "secret palace memorials" that trusted officials had sent to the emperor were published, reign by reign, thanks to the Taiwan authorities.

Those were the years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), however, and no one outside the mainland of China knew what had happened to the much larger bulk of precious historical documents that had been part of the original palace collection in Beijing in the 1930s. Most foreign historians guessed that those archives were at best being neglected or at the worst being destroyed by Chairman Mao's young Red Guards, who were determined to extirpate the "Four Olds," i.e. evils, of China's past.

Outsiders' first inkling that some of the imperial archives remained intact came after the fall of the ultra-radical "Gang of Four" in 1976. A few foreign scholars, among them the French geographer and historian Marianne Bastid, were permitted very limited and confidential access to documents from the old Palace Museum collection. Then in June 1979, I was invited to join a group of Ming and Qing historians from the United States, who visited China as part of a delegation funded by NEH and sponsored by the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China. On the third day of our visit to Beijing, we were told that we would be taken to visit the Ming-Qing archives somewhere within the Forbidden City. After a tour of the palace, we were driven around to the western side of the Forbidden City near the compound where most of China's leaders lived and where foreigners were then prohibited entry. After passing through a heavily guarded and cavernous gate, we were taken past armed security units, which used the ancient ruins in the part of the Forbidden City for war games, to five huge buildings that housed the First National Archives.

It is difficult to exaggerate the excitement with which the delegation approached these then-secret archives. We were ushered into the first of a series of vault-like storehouses that contained between 9 and 10 million sets of documents. Each set consisted of as few as one or two single documents and as many as hundreds of volumes of primary sources on everything from the price of grain in selected regions of the empire, to the diaries of the emperor's activities, the catalogues of the imperial library, and millions of official memorials in Chinese, Manchu, and Mongol that contained the records of the last four centuries of imperial rule. It did not take long to recognize that these materials constituted the largest premodern historical archives in the world. On that

muggy June afternoon in Beijing, it was clear to all of us who breathed in the camphor-laden air of the humidity-controlled vaults that the study of Chinese history would never be the same thereafter.

The opening of the Ming-Qing archives was the first in a series of documentary discoveries, shared by Chinese and foreigners alike. Thanks to the efforts of Chinese archivists, who enjoyed the highest political support during the Cultural Revolution and who were brought under the authority of the State Archive Commission in 1980-1981, major collections of Chinese historical documents were preserved not only in the former imperial palaces in Beijing and Shenyang (Mukden), but also in the old republican capital of Nanjing, where the Second National Archives of materials on the period 1912-1949 opened its doors to qualified scholars in 1980. In addition, local archives at the county and municipal level began to share portions of their catalogues and holdings with the public as well. The most impressive of these local collections were the Sichuan district and provincial archives, the Shanghai municipal archives, and the storehouse of documents kept in the household of the descendants of Confucius in Shandong province. Altogether, between 1979 and 1987 the Chinese identified 3,004 archives throughout the country, containing nearly 100 million volumes of historical data.

How can we gauge the impact of these incredibly rich documentary collections on our understanding of Chinese and world history? Even as this article is being written, researchers attached to the various archives, often in cooperation with historical research institutes and university departments, are collating and annotating sets of the documents for publication. But the published sets are only the tip of the iceberg. Since 1979, more than 1,500 foreign scholars have used the First Historical Archives for themselves. The initial effect of this documentary trove is simply overwhelming to scholars like myself who have worked before now with much more manageable collections in Taiwan, Tokyo, or London, where a few hundred thousand Chinese-language documents in the Public Record Office once seemed the world's largest available collection of local primary sources on the Qing.

Sometimes the discoveries are quite specific and precise. For example, most people have believed for nearly three-quarters of a century that the Guangxu Emperor (r. 1875-1907) was precipitately ordered to be poisoned by his notorious grand-aunt, the Empress Dowager Cixi, in 1908 as she lay upon her deathbed. This story—like the tale of the princes of the house of York put to death in the tower by Richard III—has become part of the lore of the late Qing court, providing a suitable finale for the numerous dramas that have been written about this intrigue-ridden period. Once the archives were opened, Chinese scholars discovered the records of the imperial court physician. Among them was a medical diary stretching over the many weeks of the emperor's last days as he wasted away from ordinary illness. Playwrights have thereby been deprived of a colorful story line, but our historical knowledge of the period is all the more reliable and richer for this set of documents from the history of Chinese medicine.

Another major historical controversy that the opening of the archives has helped lay to rest concerns the origins of the Boxers of 1899-1900. Many Western historians blamed the rise of the Boxers on the support of the Qing court and accused the Manchus of first secretly, and then openly, supporting popular xenophobes against Western missionaries and their converts. Although this interpretation has been opposed by other historians, who prefer to view the Boxers as a more popular and autonomous movement, the precise relationship between the peasant uprisings that broke out in Shandong province at the turn of the century and the Chinese government has remained a mystery. Thanks to the discovery of the records of the Shandong governor's office in the Beijing archives, historians—including the American scholar Joseph Esherick, Jr.—now realize that the Qing authorities initially sponsored the potentially antidynastic and chiliastic Boxers because they confused them with another, identically named group of landlord-led vigilantes who wanted to support the government against the foreign imperialists.

At yet a more general level, historians have begun to analyze the tens of thousands of legal cases in the Ming-Qing archives to try to learn more about rural society during the eighteenth century. Documents published by historians and archivists in China have been used to show that class conflict was endemic in the Chinese countryside during the 1700s between landlords and their tenants. But a new study by the UCLA historian Philip Huang, based on extensive research in the legal records of the First National Archives, shows that the social relationships exposed by these cases were certainly much more complex than simple class conflict between upper and lower classes. Brawls and homicides

most often occurred among members of the lower classes, and they reflected a complicated set of rural economic relationships that were connected with the commercial farming systems of North China.

Finally, at the most general (and technical) level of historical analysis, the discovery of voluminous and detailed records in the Beijing and Shenyang archives is beginning to clarify the mysteries of China's population history. Household registers of hereditary Qing military families, the so-called "eight banners," have been accurately kept ever since 1700. These are among the most detailed and reliable demographic sources in the world. James Lee of the California Institute of Technology and Roberg Eng of Redlands University, among other scholars, have successfully used these sources to try to reconstruct tables of the population of northeastern China during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It may even be possible for historians in China to build up a continuous demographic index for certain villages near Shenyang that run from 1700 all the way down to the 1982 census. This would constitute the longest serial set of voluminous population data in the world.

In October 1985 an international conference was convoked by the State Archive Commission in Beijing to commemorate the founding of the Palace Museum collection and to celebrate the new opening of these national archives. Scholars from throughout the world agreed that historians who are able to use these new documents are vastly expanding our understanding of the evolution of the oldest extant civilization on earth during the last five or six centuries of its development. The effects of these projects on our comprehension of China's place in world history are only now being digested and assimilated. The opening of the Chinese national archives may not be as immediately dramatic to the public at large as the discovery of the armies of terracotta warriors in the Qin tombs of the third century B.C.E. Nor have they been as visible to tourists and visitors as the displays of the jade-uniformed princes and princesses of the Han dating from the time of Christ. But to sinologists and historians, the discovery that these late-imperial archives still exist and are available to scholars trained to use them must rank among the great finds of the century, and we have yet to appreciate their full significance.

Frederic Wakeman, Jr., is president of the Social Science Research Council and former chairman of the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. *The original version of this article was published in* Humanities *(1987) and is reproduced with permission.*

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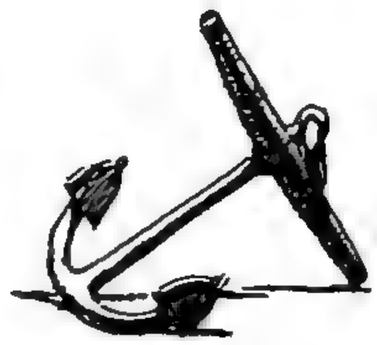

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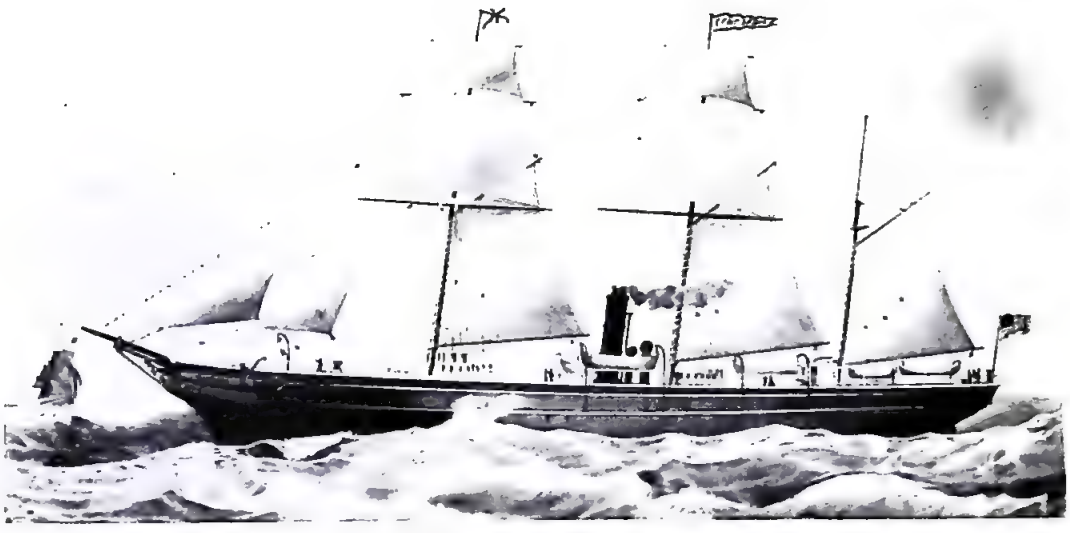

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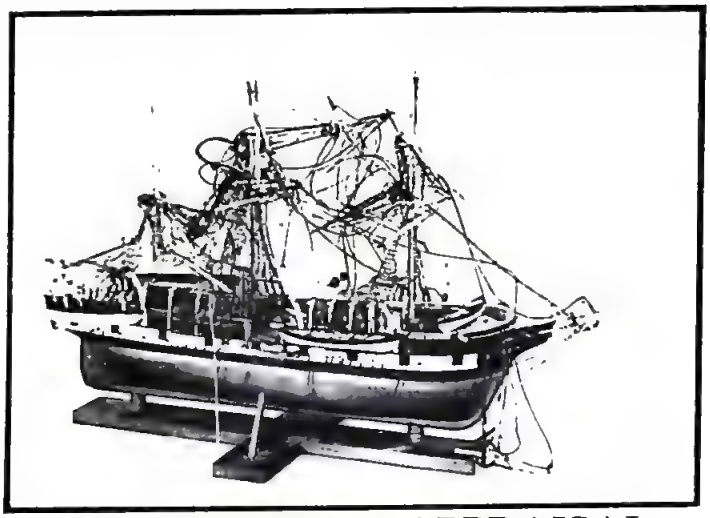

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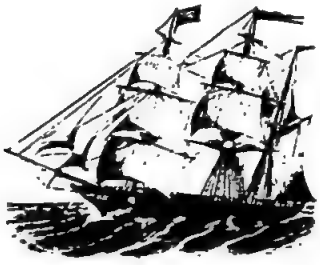

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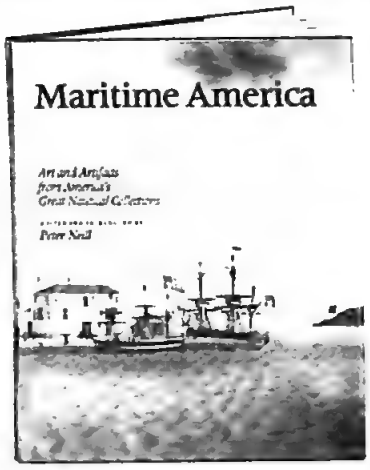

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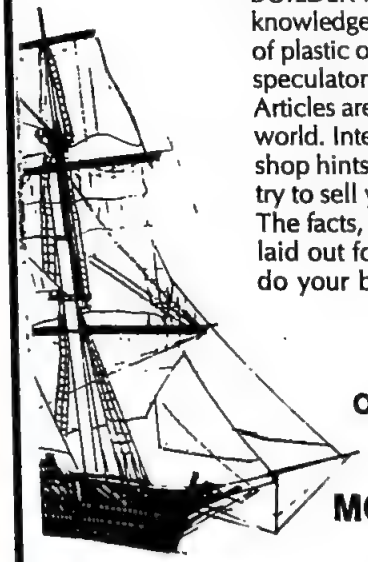

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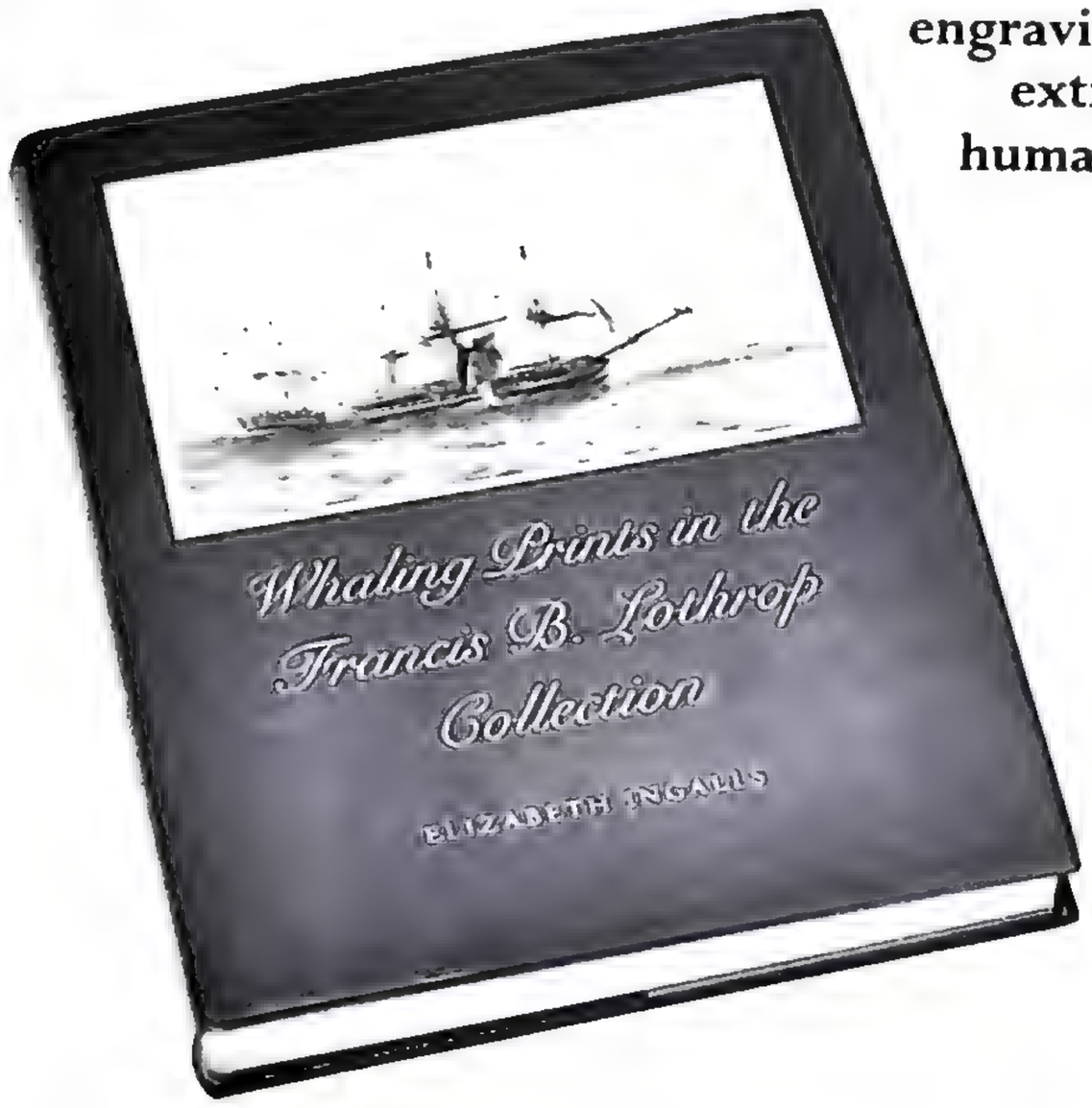

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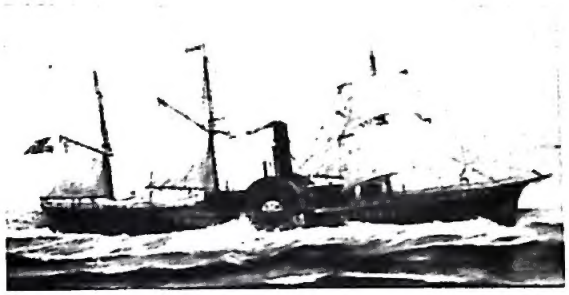

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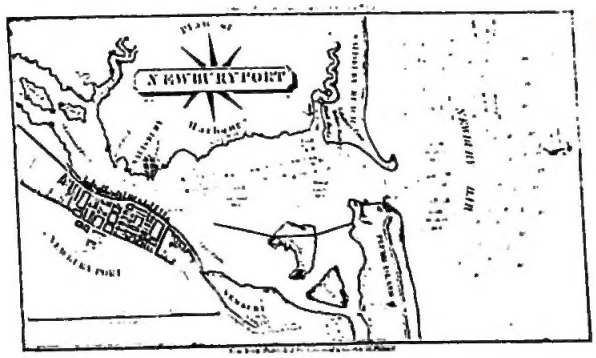

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